

MOVING: KNOWLEDGE, IMAGE, EMBODIMENT AND IRANIAN-AMERICAN
IDENTITY IN THE POST-911 USA.

BY:

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation ascribes an extended methodology of auto-ethnography to the problem of apprehending the cultural and affective crossways symbiotic with post 911, late capitalism, in the United States and on the Transnational Stage. It introduces a performative approach derived from Somatics and forms of improvisation to further elucidate notions of presence as culture in this particular context. It also includes storytelling elements that I feel necessary for surviving this period of time intact, that being a reliance on hope, wonder, audacity and truth-telling. As global structural elements have shifted, new wars are being fought and new types of racisms appear, patterns of communication as affect and presence make tricky new turns which practitioners of the technologies of affective resistance, need to understand. This dissertation works to contribute in that direction. To make this goal, extended elements of performance ethnography and auto-ethnography are used in conjunction with the tried and true formal elements of performance ethnography. Some of these include, the use of self-portraiture, time lapse photography, installation, the use of improvisational movement and the use of elements of magical realism in storytelling. Many, many of my moves here are rooted in the works of postcolonial writers, thinkers and, in particular, postcolonial third world feminist artists. I place this work in the honorable lineage of postcolonialists and third world feminists, who are busy capturing meaning and producing counter practices and counter narratives to hegemonic practices and narratives. My work attempts this kind of intervention on a tacit level.

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Introduction

Preface

Written for “Gender, Race and Ethnicity Roundtable”, ICR reunion, Spring 2012:

Being in the finishing touches phase of a dissertation that would not quiet itself enough to be written, that would not still itself enough to come to a close. Being that the only other place that I would be right now, but for here, would be at home working those finishing touches to a close. Gives the notion of presenting ‘my research’ at this juncture to this group, a certain feeling that pushes the notion of ‘my research’ out of the reaches of my own tired writing arms and places it inside the living echoing conversational discourse that happens in the rooms this afternoon.

About my research, my project writes theory and uses performance auto-ethnography as a method to uncover and recover the sensations and understanding of a shift in racial understandings of people that look like me, of me, as an Iranian-Iraqi Jewish American during the post 911 period to the present time, and of memory of who it was to become me as a daughter of diasporic Iranian Iraqi jews as I was growing up, and finally how I understand my self as a transnational subject in these times. My project uses third world feminist affiliation/collective action; and post colonial understanding to create modalities of knowing which expand the discursive field to allow for agencies in ways of being, in the traditions of many but with particular regard to the work of Chela Sandoval (Sandoval, 2000) and Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994).

This project takes understandings from these works in a new direction by suggesting a corporeality based in the theorhetical and practical work of somatics. This results in an exposition of epistemological possibilities and different notions of subjectivities that allow for

more play around oppressive discursive activity. Approaching our understanding as experiential, as corporeal, if one uses the understandings gleaned from fields such as somatics or not, recovers a multitude of possibility. Also, this work explores notions of research and subjectivity in many other ways.

My research is performed through the method of performance auto-ethnography, using written text, poetry, recorded improvised movement, site specific installation, and improvised vocal instructions to apprehend the fullness of experience at this juncture of the US politic. It has an eye for the politics and meaningful operations of affect, in the traditions of Brian Massumi (2002) and Elspeth Probyn (Probyn, 1996). The work itself carries meaning in many ways, through ideas, imagery, sound, but for me most salient is that it seems to layer feeling on top of feeling, to explain something. As if it were a song cycle. In the way this piece operates, it discusses the ways that we perform ourselves in writing more traditional ethnography, and positions alternative possibilities for other kinds of performances of both ethnography, and the self as ethnographer. In the tradition of my mentor and dear friend, Norman Denzin (Denzin, 1997) (Denzin, 2003), this work as process, discusses the politics of discourse, and the possibilities that embracing the performative affords us.

The work talks about the quality of feeling (affect) and language (discourse) in post 911 USA. It tells and shows the process of racialization and othering which I and others of 'arab' decent living in the US have experienced during this period. It explains what it meant to grow up in an environment where orientalist cultural discourse occluded a sense of my heritage and identity. What it meant to have certain spoken languages, movement languages and cultural practices be put up against what the media (I Dream of Jeanie) and high culture (The Oriental Institute)

presented in a culture which stereotyped who I am. It talks about the effects of neo-liberal capitalism, and our protests against it. It performs resistance against this, through all kinds of meaning making practices. This work draws on the works of feminist postcolonial artists such as Anna Mendieta (Viso, 2004), and Mona Hatoum (Hatoum, 1993), women who have photographed themselves and created environments, to offer alternative and more powerful readings of colonial situations. Readings which question and cajole margin/center assumptions. This work is created at the borders (Anzaldua, 1999). It is about citizenship, belonging and agency through the power of cultural production. It is about the power of generations of women who create homes through cultural meaning, and battle unhomeliness through cultural work.

This work is about hope and encourages wonder.







Three Caveats

Three Caveats-Parts of this dissertation deal specifically with the subject of embodiment and somatics. To this end, there are three caveats I would like to make to clarify my intentions. These statements apply in every instance that the below concepts are handled.

- 1) On moving- One of the main premises of this dissertation is to remind us that there is knowledge in human movement. That movement can be knowing, can create meaning and can be important in the understandings and interiority of a person, as they live in social relationship. To this end, I would like to bring to the reader's attention, that when movement is referred to in this dissertation, it should be understood not as only the small and large motor movement that the word usually connotes in the English language but that subtle movement and micromovement be considered as almost more important in the definition. This means that the notion of movement as knowledge can be as easily extended to a coma patient than it would be to a world class athlete. Many somatics practitioners and psychologists use this definition when referring to the idea of movement. (Da'oud, 2007)
- 2) On hearing-Throughout this dissertation an extended notion of 'hearing' is implied when the word is used. The definition employed will include the hearing that occurs when the skin is touched by vibration. This expands the notion of hearing to a larger scope than is usually implied by the word.
- 3) On somatics-Throughout this dissertation there will be reference to the idea of somatics. Generally, this refers to practices, psychology and philosophies that have been developed

world wide which consider the body and mind as one, and name themselves somatics. At this point, I would like to acknowledge that many of the practices that have been used and developed in the west and name themselves under this umbrella term, practice technologies which have been learned from eastern or indigenous cultures. In some cases, these origins have been credited, in others they have not. Here, I would like to acknowledge this and state that some of the practices which I have learned and are used in the process of creating this work, have their origins in body mind technologies of groups of people whose work has not been credited.









On Timelapse Photos

The timelapse photos included in this dissertation are experiments in self-portraiture. They reflect an active use of an improvisational movement methodology which is introduced in this dissertation (see Chapter Six, “Resistant Presences” for details). Preparation for this movement practice include many hours of somatics practice, both in class, in private studios and in my home studio. These practices vary but have all been used to devolve a somatic (mind/body) sensitivity to the cultural and built environment and my interaction/relationship with it. Titles which include information drawn from for use in this practice are varied (Agustoni, 2003) (Boser, 2008) (Burmeister, 1997) (Carrington, 1994) (Chia, 1985) (Chia, 1986) (Conrad) (Hackney, 2000) (Hannah, 1988) (Koch, 1997) (Mindell, 2002) (Mindell, 2004) (Nelson, 2002) (Overmyer, 2009) (Powers, 2008) (Schreiber, 1998) . Included in these titles and movement conversations is the information used in the development of the simple protocols used for the improvisations for the photos of movement/sequences included in this dissertation (Brook) (Caldwell, 1996) (Conrad) (Spolin, 2001) (Schriebner, 2001).

These photos approach art in nature but are documentation of movement research. Virtuosity in movement is not the goal of these photos, rather a documentation or expression of experiments designed to understand and work with the nature of my tacit knowledge relationship to my environment. Somatics practices can be used for research in this manner (see appendix titled “Embodied Knowledge and the Study of Culture”) and much can be understood about culture and relationship through the insights that somatic research affords us, (see Chapter Seven, Somatics and Performativity for details).

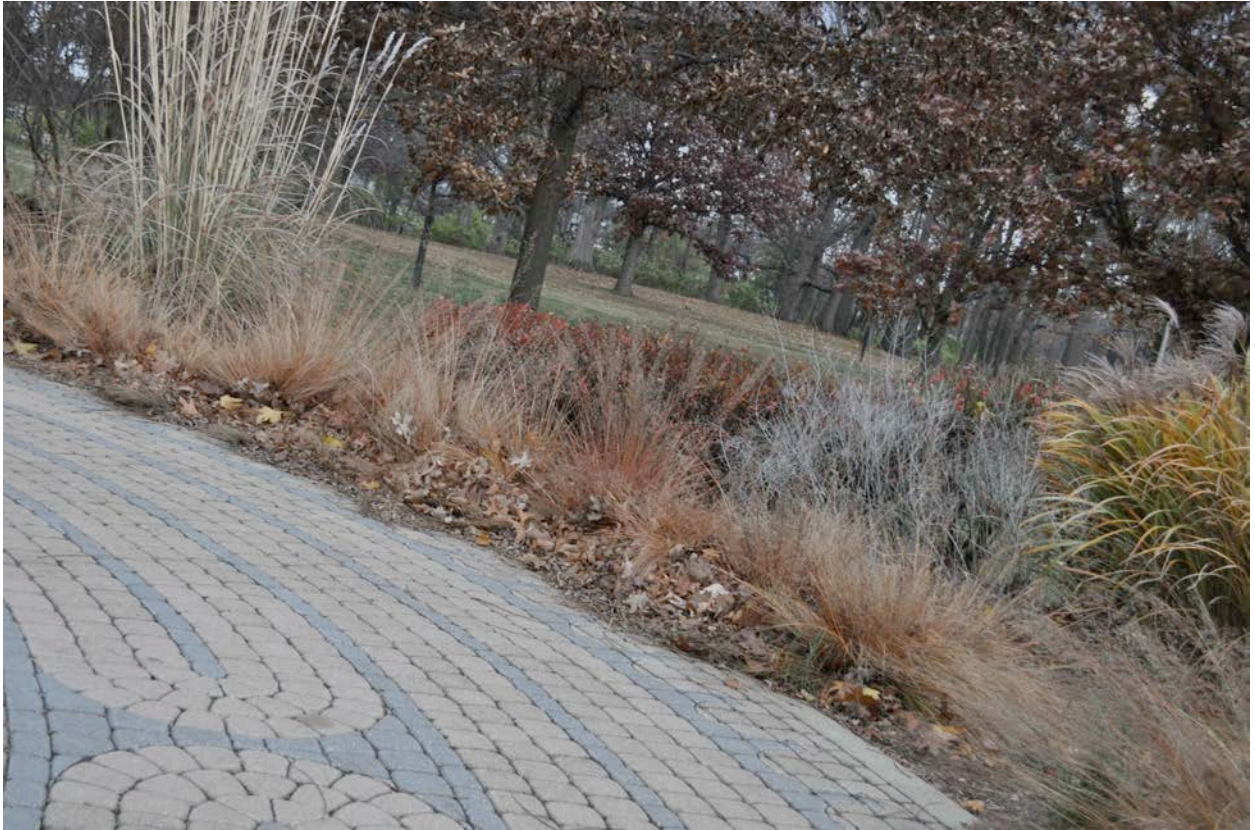
Introduction One: Work's Homes

The following document can be understood as readable, or visible as an academic/intellectual document in many ways. The two that I would like to suggest are as: (one) a performance auto-ethnography which includes ethnographic performance art, (two) a postcolonial or Third World Feminist intellectual/artistic work.

These two, of course can be understood as the same thing, as well, but for the sake of the understanding of the genesis of the ground or tradition, from which this work emerges, I, for the moment, suggest these two trajectories. This small preface is meant to explain to the reader how this work can be understood in these two trajectories. It is meant to be helpful to the reader, as a guide for how to read the work, by explaining the way I understand its homes.

Performance Autoethnography

This work is meant to extend performance autoethnography's ability to work with affect, as a primary meaning making force by introducing the theories and practices of somatics. These theories and practices enable the theorist/practitioner to explore the ways that one as a body (new materialism) apprehends the world, in/as/through relationship. In the case of this dissertation, these theories and practices, as me, enable me to contact the way I move/understand through a language of entering space (relationship), while I am moving. This is illustrated, first, in a body based writing practice, second, in the highlighting of affect, perception and relationship in the writing of the autoethnography, and third in the inclusion of timelapse photos (improvisatory movement), as part of this document. For information on the timelapse photos see the section titled, "On Timelapse Photos".



There are two kinds of time-lapse photos included in this document. One, are series, which show my relationship to the environment, by photographing the environment I am in, while I am moving. The second, are the serieses, where the camera is set up on a tripod, photographing myself, as I move through somatics/improvisation meditations which are meant as experiential explorations around how I as a body, apprehends (through relationship) the world. The improvisation protocols for this second set of serieses, are meant to deconstruct, generate, or simply stand with the ways of knowing in space, that are mine at any given moment or more habitually in my life.

These photographs can be understood within the context of the ground for this dissertation in two ways. For the performance autoethnography, they can be understood, through an addition of an improvisational movement methodology and self portrait to our ever expanding toolkit of methods. Recently, dance and movement have been explored more as a tool for research (Bagley, 2002), the addition of photographs of movement work would stand in the stead of these innovations. Please see Chapter Seven, “Resistent Presences” for a fuller explanation of this experiential methodology. This kind of ‘research’ has taken place in the field of Dance, perhaps, since its early years with the explorations of Isadora Duncan, to the present moment, most notably in the context of Contact Improvisation, Movement Researchⁱ, and in the applications of somatics practices in Danceⁱⁱ (Bales and Netti-Fiol, 2008). Generally, much work in Contemporary Dance can and is considered ‘research’ by the makers of dance, be it for its symbolic or experiential components. My own work has been influenced and borrows from these researches, is very simple in its scope compared with ‘Dance’, but delivers in terms of its proposed purpose in this dissertation. Namely, as performance autoethnography, it adds another



dimension as to how the body and meaning making can be understood, another method for practice.

As a contribution to the dissertation, understood in the paradigms of postcolonial or transnational feminist intellectual/artistic practice, these photographs, stand once again in good company with many postcolonial or transnational feminist researchers, who have themselves/bodies as main research sites or tools. Many have in the field of art, the few I would mention here are Mona Hatoum (Hatoum, 1993), Frida Kahlo (Herrera, 1983), Shirin Neshat (Daftari, 2009), and Ana Mendieta (Viso, 2004). These women deal with the themes of displacement and home in their performance and installation art, and use the presence and absence of themselves, often in their works. Once again, the photographs presented here, as my contribution, are relatively simple compared to the scopes and depths of the research these women conduct, but as a part of the dissertation, I believe they deliver, as smaller pieces of a larger contribution to the field of postcolonial or transnational feminist artistic and intellectual work.

This dissertation uses the format of autoethnography for many reasons, many of which have to do with the understanding of subjectivities. First, autoethnography allows for an embodied understanding of the world (Moriera, 2007) (Diversi and Moriera, 2009). Placing the subjectivity of the author in the work allows for an embodied perspective of situations and conditions. In this piece, experiments in embodiment are further enhanced by the addition of somatics in both theoretical and methodological written/performed directions. Also, in ethnography, the drawings of who people are, are somewhat determined by meaning systems based in ethical considerations, (Christians, 2000), the ownership of the researcher's voice, eye/I, make for a redrawing, not only of the subjectivity of the researcher but the others in the



picture/story/song; this feeds into and is feed by choices in the types of ethics used by the researcher (Denzin, 1997, pg 274)) (Christians, 2000), thus the use of autoethnography enables the shifting of the notion of subjectivities in the ‘text(?)’ , which signal the possibility for the use of a different set of ethics, which may are may not be to the benefit of the researcher’s aims.

In the case of this dissertation, an ethic of care and love, are evoked to the extent that is possible, and the shifting of subjectivities are a result of this. The shifting of the parameters of subjectivities of how people are portrayed in this piece evoke the possibility of a different kind of ethic. (Denzin, 1997) (Christians, 2000). Finally the use of autoethnography in the piece, is important in the disscusion of subjectivity in this work, as positioned as a work of critical race theory, postcolonial narrative, in that the work outlines a sense of the development of agency in a person (me), whose subjectivity is complicated by the politics of race and ethnicity in a world, where my body has been framed in unusual racial disourse in the recent past. The use of autoethnography, in this case, allows for an explanation and exploration of the affects of racist discourse on postcolonial (empire) subjectivities as no other form could.

This work is performance in so many ways.

First, in the ways that it functions as performance as ethnography, and in the ways that ethnography performs in and organizes the fields, it operates within. First, ethnography performs an action. When writing our lives into meaning, the way that the writing of ethnography conducts meaning, is political (Moriera. 2007) (Diversi and Moriera, 2009) (Denzin, 1997) (Denzin, 2003). Because of the value given ethnography as vetted and canonical knowledge, the way the performance of ethnography organizes knowledge is important. An intervention and



redirection of the way that ethnography performs knowledge, it a key element in the decisions by which this dissertation is written. The formal elements of this dissertation were generated to enable different kinds of meanings to be available.

Second, as the formal elements of ethnography enable the ways knowledge can be performed, the ways ethnography is positioned in academic fields is also an element of the power of ethnography's performance. This dissertation is written with this in mind, wanting to bring an ethnography that generates knowledge, in ways that conducts interventions and ruptures in the existing knowledge systems, that occlude the political actions inherent in racial, ethnic, gender and class oppressions. The formal performative elements of this dissertation, the ways that it perform knowledge, or that I perform knowledge through it, or the ways that the universe (Barad, 2007) performs knowledge through it, attempt to decolonize academic knowledge production. (Diversi and Moriera, 2009)

This performance autoethnography dissertation performs in so many other ways. Movement pieces are performed and photographed. People moving through the installation I made and present here are affected by the interaction of their performance and the installations performance of space. Elements of the performative power of sound are evoked by the text and the sound piece in this dissertation. Part of the performative I/me are influenced by the performance of movement meditations, whose documentation is included in this performance. The documentations of the generative and deconstructive abilities of these performances, may or may not be communicated to the reader, adding another layer of performative function to the dissertation.



As people, as social beings, as producers of language, we are, in some sense, in constant performance (constituted by, constituting). The creation and iteration of this piece/document/text is in this grandest manner, performance. This work performs a multiple voice messy text. It is collage and montage. It is ethnography in the form of performance (Garoian, 1999), and it is a work of standpoint epistemology (Denzin, 1997). This work takes on form as function, it stretches form to function, as it suggests possibilities for function. It performs itself in a spiral, as opposed to a linear work. This work also is filled with many small jokes and many linked meanings.

At any point something the ‘reader’ encounters can connect to some other part of the dissertation. In this way the form of the dissertation operates more like memory does, than an argument would. Though I believe this work presents many strong arguments, as well. Care has been taken to include as many appeals to the sensory as possible in this work. Its aim is to come to experience. This work is meant to mean differently to each person who encounters it, to appeal to their sense of experience. Like a mirror. This work admits, that it could be a mirror. It questions its authority, it demands its authenticity. In its own contextualization of these words it allows for new meanings. It follows in the tradition of Dwight Conquergood (Conquergood, 1985) as it reaffirms the power of ethics and performance, in the tradition of Soyini Madison (Madison, 2005) as it questions and reworks the performance of ethnography. It tells stories which revel in layers, as valued and exemplified by Carolyn Ellis (Ellis, 2009). It tells stories which place the researcher as a compassionate body in situations, as invented and explained by Ron Pelias (Pelias, 2004). This follows in the larger vein of the use of shifts in forms to allow for alternative voices to create alternative vision in the broader field of cultural studies as employed

by Elspeth Probyn in her use of bio-ethnography (Probyn, 1996) and Audrey Lorde in her use of mytho-biography (Durham). Also, continental philosophers, Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 1996) and Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1972) have used an alternative text format.

Postcolonial and Third World Feminist intellectual/artistic work

In a way that is salient to me, this work finds its ground among the research, intellectual, and artistic work of fellow postcolonialists and third world feminists. This mix of a mess that occurs on a culture or a people, who have found themselves in the throes of displacement, at a constant loss because of what the wind has blown in, this is where I find myself and my voice. The action of this work, is that I have been able to identify for myself, the hybridities, the trajectories and losses that a life lived inside empire has created for me.

Where there is never anyway of telling the full story, our languages have been too compromised, too much has been hidden, or stolen. All I know is that now when I bump up against something that is difficult to name or identify, I know where to start looking to find the reason why. I also understand why I have spent so much of my life's energy having to define and understand. Why I seem to so quickly fall into situations that I don't understand. Why I always seem to be coming from multiple angles. Why I change so quickly, why nothing is ever enough or just right, and why I don't take much for granted.

My struggles are reflected back to me in the words of Gloria Anzaldua (Anzaldu, 1999). I understand my interest in ways of being through Chela Sandoval's idea of oppositional consciousness. (Sandoval, 2000). Homi Bhabha, through his explanation of the concepts of unhomeliness and the beyond, meanings made in interstices (Bhabha, 1994). These writer's

works start to articulate for me, directions that I have always taken, the conditions which I have always known existed, while I made my day to day decisions, but were never fully clear. Their articulations identify differences in the way I rhythm (multiple rhythms) my life, rhythm differently from others, whose journey has not been rife with the pleasures and difficulties of translation, and the jumpiness that comes with the breaks and fissures that occur in the postcolonial subaltern experience.

Early Caribbean postcolonial thinker/writer Aimee Cesaire (Cesaire, 1972) approached the problem of writing to postcolonial oppression in the oppressor's language by finding an ally in surrealism and employing some of their techniques in his writing. The question of how does a person from a dominated minority frame questions, and create answers about postcoloniality when a colonializing language is so predominate is often paramount. The answers are prolific. From postcolonial artists who use all kinds of methods to express and create, to music artists creating expressive forms (Davis, 1999) (Porter, 2002), to literary and intellectual writers using form, style and content to create a more capable language (Cesaire, 1972) (Smith, 2004) that enables a reformulation of questions, the creativity of postcolonial cultural production is powerful, unstoppable and prolific. The art, the music, the writing has facilitated and reinforced cultural spaces, that rock in tandem symbiosis with political and social change movements. The need to be able speak it, and to be able to feel it is paramount for us to be able to act on it, in any unified kind of manner.

And on one hand, as while, this work is so clearly in the tradition of performance ethnographers who are looking to decolonize the academy, on the other, it belongs to the people in my past and present who work to decolonize the world through strategic and tactical interventions (Sandoval, 2000) with their thoughts, sounds, brushstrokes, and words.

Introduction Two: The Moment; of Fear and Race

This dissertation is a culmination of so many years of study, and the years of my life as a knower. Primarily, this dissertation is about my own issues of belonging (being?) (longing?).

Primarily, this dissertation is about how culture, meaning and the subject is understood, and how it can be understood differently. Primarily, this dissertation is about how the knowledge inside a postcolonial/transnational identity, being mine, shifts and change when looked at with care. How fissure are discovered, how ruptures are encouraged, how wounds were made, how integrity, pride or at least a fuller voice can be recovered.

The work of colonizing subjectivity is often about erasure, erasure of what we know of ourselves, so that it may be replaced with identity knowledge that lend themselves to the colonizing interests. In the writing of the dissertation, I can clearly say that this is what my family experienced in their movement from Iran to the USA. I also know that these identity workings were already in play in Iran while my parents lived there. I believe that for them, there was also a great deal of excitement about what could happen here, they were interested in their hybridity. What could become for them, when what the USA afforded them, would happen. This ‘what could become’ was also a part of their lives “backhome”, because the lines between where is the USA and where is Iran, was not that clear for them in a cultural sense. This I believe is the case right now for many places in the world, more now, than ever, the lines between here and there, and what happens here and there, are blurred.

While writing this dissertation on ‘Arab’-American identity in the United States, events such as the 911 attacks on the World Trade Center, the deployments of troops to



Afganistan and Iraq, the re-election of George Bush, the strong emergence of the US right, the rise of Global Neo-Liberal capitalism to its current powers, the importance of information networks, brought and bring about cultural and social shifts, material, meaningful and affective, that have sent our worlds into formation and re/formations, again and again. So, that only shaking so fast, that the eye cannot perceive movement, is the pause that we have. The somewhat openness, along with the airtight lock that these systems and changes have brought, and the constant loss loss loss, now finds people in this moment occupying spaces all over the world demanding accountability to leaders, who served monied interests and with no regard for the public.

Our loves and labor are being siphoned and stored for later use in capitalist (performance) productions. In the US, post-911, fear was captured and its seeds and starts were greenhouse cultivated, and re-injected into networks, to see where they could catch (Massumi). Vines grasping networks, the fear of terrorism, the fear of war, the fear of chemical agents, the fear of 'arabs', the fear of loosing your money, the fear of loosing your home, the fear of loosing your job, the fear of having no health insurance, the fear of loosing your child at war, the fear of having no future.

As the narratives of the future speaks to the present in alarming, isolating tones, (Massumi). and the inside of our bodies shudder and cry (helpless) and now. the hair on my arms stand at attention with joy (hope), as finally people start to stand for anything that can break the gridlock powerhold. As my friend said to me, when dealing with the in, othertimes, mundane details of her life, 'it is as if they are trying to reduce us to nothing'.



This dissertation is being written in this moment, with particular attention to discourse and affect. In the post-bush, post 911, US discourse, we have been clobbered with language meant to reduce our efficacy as actors in a democracy. We have been seized.

On Iranian-Iraqi American Identity

This auto-ethnographic piece on my Iranian-American identity is being written and witnessed during a time when a part of the US nation's oppressive political affective discourse, discursive affect, is based on images and impressions (stereotypes) of 'Arabs' or the people who live in the Middle East. While the nation's racist foundations and attempts at erasures of historical events of colonization, have been so heavily dependent on the stereotyping of 'racial' groups, that have included, in the past 'Arabs' or people from the Middle East and other people with 'brown' skin color (Prashad, 2000), a new round of venomous stereotyping of the 'dangerous powers' of the middle easterner (fear), have been the flame on the fuel that rocketed the corporate run US's velocity towards the economic, material, affective and meaningful space that we are in today. The flags went on the windows, the ribbons were tied onto trees, the bombs were thrown, the lives were lost, the money changed, the mortgages were broken, the people lost their jobs. The way our world changed in the US and in some other places, after nine one one, is measurable (Denzin, 2007),. The matter of it, its switch exchange of material, the occurrence and reoccurrence of broken neighborhoods and surge in the sale of luxury goods, is touchable, noticeable, ideology transferred into politics, translates into matter, weighing heavily on the soldiers of citizenry (what kinds of citizens have we become?). This has happened before, has been happening all along, can happen again, happens more to some than to others.

Has been happening all along. Happens more to some than others.

While the words to explain it are lost, somewhere in ability to make the control happen, is the fear of what could happen if the ‘arabs’ ‘get us’ again. Those little pictures of male ‘arab’ faces inserted next to the replay of the horror of the towers falling over and over again. The impression they left on fearing hearts, mobilized by some notion of their own need for ‘protection,” allowed actions to be planned, rhetorics to grow, that without which, these new governmental positions could not be taken. This is nothing new, colonialism based in Orientalism (Said, 1978) (Said, 1994) (Prashad, 2000), colonialism based in oppression of the Africans, of Indegenous People; the mechanisms of the narratives of racism are always active, as a cognitive crutch in the colonial activities of the US. This dissertation also talks about the general political moment, globally and in the US because for me it would be impossible to describe one without the other. I choose this time, or rather it chose me, to write this account of my own notions of culture as it operates in this moment. The tools I have are various, and have been provided by magnificent contemporaries and traditions. This dissertation writes against the fear and despair of this moment, encouraging hope and wonder to destabilize current affective strongholds. In this direction it activates many technics, one being the use of magical realism, another being improvisation, another being the power of love and community. What can my single voice add? Another look. Or as one friend said, ‘its more stories we can tell,” and another says, “more ammunition for our side.”

This dissertation looks at the current meanings of what it is to be me, as an Iranian-Iraqi-Jewish Woman during this period of time, and how it was and felt to be this person that I am while I was growing up, which was an entirely different climate for immgrant Iranians. Significant in relations to the US, by Iranians are three political periods. My parents came in the early 1960’s

while the Iran was still governed by the Shah Reza Pahlavi. This was a period of ‘friendly relations’ between the US and Iran. There were few Iranians that came to the United States during this period, and our US ethnic group was not noticed by the general public. For a while, when I was growing up, I was read as white, Italian, Greek. We positioned our ‘culture’, as one that would be interesting to outsiders. The next noticeable wave of Iranian immigration to the US was during Iran’s Islamic Revolution, where US relations with Iran were hostile and there was some name calling and taunting and prejudice, here for me ethnic visibility began. And finally in the more recent past, US relations to Iran are oppositional, and prejudice towards middle easterners is prevalent, and I have experienced racial profiling at the airport and the bank.

Set Me Out to Dream







Color me culture
Wrap me in the Reign of Knowledge
And set me out to dream

Prayer

What about innocence
Who talks of innocence
Who talks for innocence

The heart is always in prayer

Allow yourself to Appear

Fascination

Is this love

Is this aggression

This thing

This fascination



I looked over at the most beautiful woman in the world.

She was angry at me

and I said to her,

‘will you just put it down, just put it down’.

Then I felt myself lifted from the earth.

I rose a full inch and I realized that I had put it down.

That night I dined at the long table

of the people who hadn’t sinned

and those that realized that they had

and had forgiven themselves.

The air was light on our skin.

The stars swelled above us in the night sky.

Praise to the graces of this imperfect world

Start

To put the poetry

Together.

“put the poetry together”



we put the poetry together,
the way we put the poetry together

Simply down to you

Simply down to me

The simplicity of who we are
and where we are going

Count them on your fingers
One, two, three

And in a whisper
the meanness of the world washes
Itself off
As a teardrops

Go outside and walk free

Want to
wish to
Quietly waking

Want to
wish to
Quietly walking

The beauty of a combination of words
Has the ability
To shift us from one



To another

To turn
Us into one
Kind of person
Over another

It is free
But it doesn't come to you
for free

There is nothing
Nothing
in the world that replaces the love of a friend

freely, honestly, and joyfully given

call the rest of it something

call it something
it is
not much at all

There is a deep magic in you
My dear friend
Who lives alone
And owns the lonely empty sky

Yearning to feel when touched
How are you touched?

Does it feel on
The inside
Of you?

&&&&&

Today I talked to my friend
Who lost for love

And I said to her
You are never wrong
Because you are love
We all are

I said, "I love you"

&&&&&

This world is full
Of small moments
That have gone arwy
And have been turned into
Catastrophe

It is not careful enough with us
Or perhaps we are not careful enough with each other
And the smallest vulnerability
Can go so wrong

The machine is so big heartless senseless
it takes us away from who we should be
To each other
And away from our delicacy and subtlty

Our organs know everything that happens
And transfers this into who we are

&&&&&&&

When one is living in dangerous places
One never knows which risk is the one you should not take

One forgets also how to know when the danger
is gone

I look again at the most beautiful woman at the world
She was up on a ledge
And say its ok
you can come down now
but she says
'its ok,

I like it up here.'

and
this is part of what makes
her so damn beautiful

&&&&&

I am a wound
stopped by love folded onto
itself
over and over again
unfurling

I stand near
completely unafraid

this is what life can give us
I say.

Praise to the graces of this imperfect world.

&&&&

what are you offering us
when we can't even listen to the news
without crying
what are you offering us

where would a call for real change
come from
what would it look like
where can we find it
what words, gestures, movements
could we use to make it

calling forward the graces of this imperfect world

&&&&&&&

I have wanted to find love for so long, I can't believe I found it, she said.

Its what you wanted isn't it?, I asked

&&&&&&&

the imaginary rat a tap tap
of my computer keys
trace the rhythm of your name
as I write with power

your fire
lights the world

knowledge from emotion

moves us to another level

you know it
with the steps
of your feet
&&&&

I am a wound
stopped by love folded onto
itself
over and over again
unfurling

the fireworks, rockets of independence
cover the field

I stand near
completely unafraid

this is what life can give us
I say.

Praise to the graces of this imperfect world.

&&&&&&&

How is it our own

Or how can we make it ours.

What do I need to do

For

The rhythms

Of

My

Own

Being

To

Feel

Like

It

Has

Bearing

On

The

Earth

As

The world

Howls

Wind

High

And

Low.

My

SPECIAL DELIVERY

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Joy

And

Heidegger.

Pink.

The ranking

And

The

Heirarchy.

Say

Nothing.

Because

We

Don't

Want

To

Get

In

The

Way.....

Build

It strong

Like

Bricks

In

A brownstone

Back

Dreaming of

Dance.

Put it

Altogether

Tomorrow is cornered

“ globalization is the elephant in the room”

tomorrow

is

in the corner

with the gangsters

tomorrow

has

been

taken

by the

gangsters

and the

thieves

We will write one about fear...and one about love

yes..can we believe

how unbelievable

yes, and

we wish

it has

the beautiful

and the not so beautiful

in it

Book One

Chapter One: Preludes

Prelude One-Christmas 2009, On Acknowledgements

There are conditions, we make atmosphere

Christmas 2009

At Christmas time 2009, on the day after Thanksgiving, on the busiest shopping day of the year, I stayed near Michigan Avenue in Chicago, in an ok hotel room in a nice hotel. I was very tired, I had had a difficult trip visiting family. So it wasn't as fun as it usually is to stay in nice hotels for me. I mostly slept. I did venture out for lunch with a very old friend that I hadn't seen for twenty years. It was marvelous to see her, she is a kind and talented person with a kind and interesting husband and it was nice to have good company.

We went to a restaurant on the Gold Coast. It was cool. We talked about George Bush's policies with various levels of dislike. My friend thought he might have been right to go to war in Iraq. Her husband thought Bush was a complete jerk, he didn't like anything Bush did. And I under no terms liked anything George Bush, the second, did in office. The conversation then turned to the failing economy, and my friends from the suburbs of Chicago talked about how the failing economy was effecting those that they knew. I just talked about how many working class people were suffering because of Bush's bad policy, bad neo-liberal, economic policy. I said I worried when I heard about the thousands of job layoffs at places like Circuit City. I said my heart broke when the front page of the paper showed people living in tent cities in Florida, or when the news reported the stories of grade school administrators coping with students who are homeless. The

news certainly has been either strident or sad these days. And the spectacular save by our hopeful new president hadn't got caught by my radar, yet.

I love these friends and I was happy to spend time with them and we ate in this wonderful restaurant full of wood and bustle and life, people and clattering silver and china. We were so busy catching up that I didn't have time to look at the menu and so I just ordered shrimp salad like my friend Lina did. And then we decided to go shopping, and we went to the new large upper class department store located on State Street. It was in a mall full of shops and shoppers. The department store was on each level of the mall, and then there were other stores on each floor. My friends and I looked around on the different floors of the department store in the mall. It was crowded with people frenetically picking up objects and then putting them down at a medium speed.

There was lots of high reaching, and low crouching, and peering over to the side of things. It was a place that would seem lusciously well-stocked but organized when there just a few people in the store, as it would be on any given weekday afternoon, but today it was crowded and the people that were there were fascinated, reaching over and around each other, holding an purse in the air to open it and check on the inside for the kind of lining it had, bending over to try on a pair of shoes. Patterns of consumption, like birds in flight formation.

The merchandise seemed unremarkable to me until I finally got to an area of the store that had interesting tee shirts on a three-sided rack, each side held three tee-shirts. "These are nice I thought". When I looked at the tag I was taken a back at its eighty-five dollar price and, of course, the only purses worth taking a second glance at were priced at over four hundred dollars each. Certainly there were items that were being sold at a lower cost but I imagine it wasn't unusual for the people who were shopping on this day to see things being sold at these prices.

My friends and I visited floor after floor of this store, there were the same kinds of crowds all over.

I am a sale shopper myself and am used to that sense of the hunt that happens when you are looking for a bargain item but there was something different about this crowd to me. They seemed delirious. I can't explain why they seemed this way to me. But they just did, there was something about the way they circled about things, hovered over them and around them and then zeroed in what they may want with a very easy intensity, but with a bit of fear or perhaps a practical focus. There wasn't desperation there but maybe a sense of people exerting their right to be shopping there at the expensive department store. It is still ok to shop here for Christmas, right? Yes, it is. Absolutely, their bodies made the point of saying.

I really enjoyed spending time with my friends that day. It was fun to see their playfulness, my old friend's at the cosmetics store looking at lip gloss colors and her husband spending much, much time in the toy store. I'm sure he is a sweet father to his children. He stopped for a particularly long time at a display for the Lego store. It had a quite intricate structure built, of course, of Lego in the window. When we left the store, they took a cab that would take them to the commuter station, to the train that would get them to their suburban home. They quickly grabbed the cab with very little time for us to say goodbye. I waved my friends off quickly and headed up to Michigan Avenue near the river.

I made a left at Michigan Avenue and began my trek down the grand avenue north towards Water Tower Place. The sidewalk was very crowded. There was hardly any space to walk on those wide sidewalks and the crowd moved slowly. I enjoyed this grand avenue. It is a place that I remember as a child. On this day, as you got closer to Water Tower from the river, the sidewalk got more and more full of people. Finally, the walkway was so packed that you really could

hardly move for the rows and rows of people who were trying to make their way forward. It was walking gridlock traffic. I walked on the side closest to the buildings in their granite and marble facades, gingerly making my way forward, barely sliding past the other more orthodox walkers. Ever since I was in high school I would figure out how to snake through crowds, I was always the one in the lead when we went to big festivals. Today, my plan of sliding along buildings was working relatively well and then a thing happened.

Walking along I stepped right in front of my friend Stella from the graduate program I am in Champaign/Urbana. I was surprised to see her there on Michigan Avenue. I hadn't seen her for a while. She finished school while working her very nice job. Stella is a very sweet and unassuming person. I like her a lot. Sweet, smart, kind, generous, unassuming, easy going, pleasant to be around. A few years back she told me about her son, who had enlisted in the army and was going to fight in the wars that George Bush, the second started. She expressed her reservations about her son going off to fight. He had a wife and a child at home. She told me that she had always voted Republican but was really struggling with supporting Bush's decisions to go to war and that this was particularly hard for her because her son was going to fight. When she talked to me about this, I told her that it is perfectly normal to have these kinds of conflict. I tried to be supportive.

I was thrilled to see her and meet her son that was with her on that day. He was a very kind young man. And as we stood there on sidewalk in the thin margin between the slowly barely moving walking crowd and the buildings chatting, exchanging pleasantries, we detected a small movement from below. Looking down we noticed that a young man was at the feet of Stella's son, giving his shoes a quick shoeshine. Stella's son looked quite surprised and a little bit embarrassed that anyone would be so low to the ground, shining his shoes. He was

uncomfortable and didn't know what to do. When the man who was doing the shoe shine rose to standing, Stella quickly whipped out a few dollars and he quickly snaked off into the crowd.

Chicago, Gale, My Grandma and the Edgewater Beach Hotel

I love Chicago. It holds my soul, as do a few other places that I have spent time in my life. I love the breezy blueness of the lake and how its beauty is free for anyone who passes to enjoy. The lakeshore in Chicago has an egalitarian sense to it. The beaches are filled with all kind of people. And so wherever you are in Chicago, if you are near the lakeshore there is always a chance to have the kind of wildness or freedom or joy that you might have in the woods...its free....and its beautiful.

The Chicago that you might know is quite different than the one I grew up in. Chicago was a working person's city. Beautiful and industrious there is a special practicality that Chicagoans have. On some level they are no nonsense. The city and its inhabitants have changed since the time that I have lived there. There is a trendiness there that makes my tongue slip down into my throat. Chicago, when I lived there, I was lucky enough to have known some of the most interesting of people.

My friend Gale, perhaps my best friend in the world is someone that I spent a great deal of time with in Chicago. We toured the city on our bikes. She is a lovely person and her affection is freely given. She is a person who truly loves people and needs them in a Chicago sense of the word. Maybe to me Gale is Chicago.

I think we were in the sixth grade. I met her on the Roger's School playground parking lot. We were really lucky kids growing up in the neighborhood that we did. It was an easy and a fun place to live. It was a place in the city. It was a place where you could make mischief and not

have it turn into trouble. It was a neighborhood that took whatever kind of trouble there was and muted it, so there could be good. A neighborhood looked after by kind eyes.

I grew up in a big shell of a house. There was plenty of room, my mother kept it nice. It was a wonderful place to retreat to after the days and days of adventure that I had out in the playgrounds and later the streets of Chicago. We moved to West Rogers Park when I was ten. After living further inside the city for the years before. Looking back it was cool to live in the neighborhood that I lived in before we moved to Rogers park. The neighborhoods were more ethnic and more rough and tumble, there was an edginess to the places I lived in before I was ten that makes more sense to who I am right now, than the relative comfort I lived in West Rogers Park. When I was really small I lived by Foster Beach in Chicago. It is quite remarkable the ways that we have memory from our early childhood. There are details from this time that I will never forget. Like how we were so close to the city beach and how when my grandfather and grandmother came from Iran, we would go to spend time there. Not like it was a paradise but like it was a really good thing to do. Nothing fancy just simple and good and fun, citified and comfortable.

My grandma and grandpa from Iran, I do miss them. They were the most wonderful people. I mean wonderful. There was something wonderful about them. They brought wonder to my life. Little girls, a lot of them under four, know a lot about wonder. Wonder is the most spectacular thing to them. Wonder and love.

When I was a little girl, we lived across the street from the old Edgewater Beach Hotel. It was big pink hotel on the lakeshore. It was big, old and fancy and seemed to not fit very well in the neighborhood that we lived in. The hotel was rich and our family was not. I remember some

days when we would be walking across from the hotel, my father would scoop me up in his arms and say, “Someday I’m going to take you to stay at the Edgewater Beach Hotel.” My father also has a joke he likes to tell about when he first came to live in the United States. He says, “When I came to the United States, my first job was in a fancy hotel, I worked in the kitchen, I was a pot washer. Then, I got a promotion (emphasis on the word promotion), I became (pause) a dishwasher. It so funny the way he tells it. And I in this 47 year old incarnation of myself take special joy in staying in nicer hotels whenever I get a chance. I get really happy when I get to stay in one. Just like a little girl would.

Back then, We lived in a brown brick apartment building. There were three or four of them. With a courtyard, like a vacant lot with grass in it, attaching them. And this is where my grandmother and grandfather would come to stay with us when they came from Iran. I can remember being small and trying my hardest to walk across the whole courtyard, it was very large and I did it, I got all the way across. When I went to visit this courtyard later on in life I was expecting a very large space and I was first surprised, then I giggled, when I realized that it was actually quite small.

In this neighborhood at this time my life was filled with wonderful people and places. Always, it has been this way. There have been very special people coming in and out of my life. Sometime too quickly, and sometimes they stay for a time, but there is no telling who and in what moments they will seem important to me. How they will and have made meaning special. How they become close and how they are distant. And how they teach me to be me and to make this world that was all share together.

My grandmother, Grandma Moslee on my mom's side was so special. There was something stately about her as she grew older and you could see that in the way that she moved when she was younger. I am so happy that I see her in myself, as I grow older. When I say to people that I am starting to look like my grandma as I get older, they kind of worry about me. But I am thrilled, she has passed on and I miss her and when I see in my face and body, something of her, I feel close to her. When I was little I loved and admired her so. My grandfather Habib, was a kind man, he always seems a little cold and distant to me. Like he had a bit of an edge and that is quite an interesting thing for a little kid to pick up.

Four years old, you know a lot when you are four. As a matter of fact, we all know a lot at any age, but somehow we shut ourselves off from it. Its strange isn't it. The way we would rather give ourselves away than let ourselves expand in our knowing. Because there really is an awful lot that we know from quite early on and there are ways that we attach to who we are supposed to be, our stances, from so early on in life that we rarely get back to what we know.

On the Subject of Extended Acknowledgements

This dissertation (celebration dissertation) approaches the subject of meaning making at particular junctures. For me meaning is rooted in body material, spatial understanding, sound, text, image, and memory; and people and places. Traditionally acknowledgements at the beginning or at the end of our works, signal a momentary pause in the performance of a text, where it is acknowledged that knowledge is born in life beyond the page. In the acknowledgements we have a chance to admit that our work is of a life lived full of love, laughter and heartbreak, the faces who kept us company during long cold winters when we work

day and night to make our texts happen. For this reason, I extend my acknowledgements far into the following work-as you will see the acknowledgements scattered into the insides of this piece. Please understand this break in form to mean that I understand that any knowledge or statement made is born in relationality, is always made between the two or more of us, or of the many me's and places where I have been. I hope that is well conveyed to you, dear reader, that every page in this dissertation is dripping with love and gratitude for the many people and place that have made life with me.

Prelude Two-The Yoga of Indian Classical Dance

We copy, we can never copy

I flip through the pages of a book called “A Yoga of Indian Classical Dance,” (Gupta, 2000) it appears to be a handbook of yoga that is meant to teach the practitioner something about classical Indian dance. It is so interesting to me what people in the United States do with what they believe are customs from India. From well meaning but insensitive friends who jokingly make the ommmm sound when trying to convey calm to the very large, very large ‘yoga’ movement in the United States, Indian tradition has been pulled from its socio-cultural context and has become a signifier emptied and refueled to meet the needs and beliefs of people from the USⁱⁱⁱ. I wonder about all of this, sensing and knowing how my own US, “Americaness” has done the same thing to my Iranian/Iraqi sense of self. That part of me that was pushed aside, so I learned to function on some reasonable level in the United States. In that way, so that I could grow into the person that I am, so that I could survive, so that I could thrive, but also, suffer the fissures and breaks of not really ever knowing a certain part of myself, except through resonance, traces and tracings.

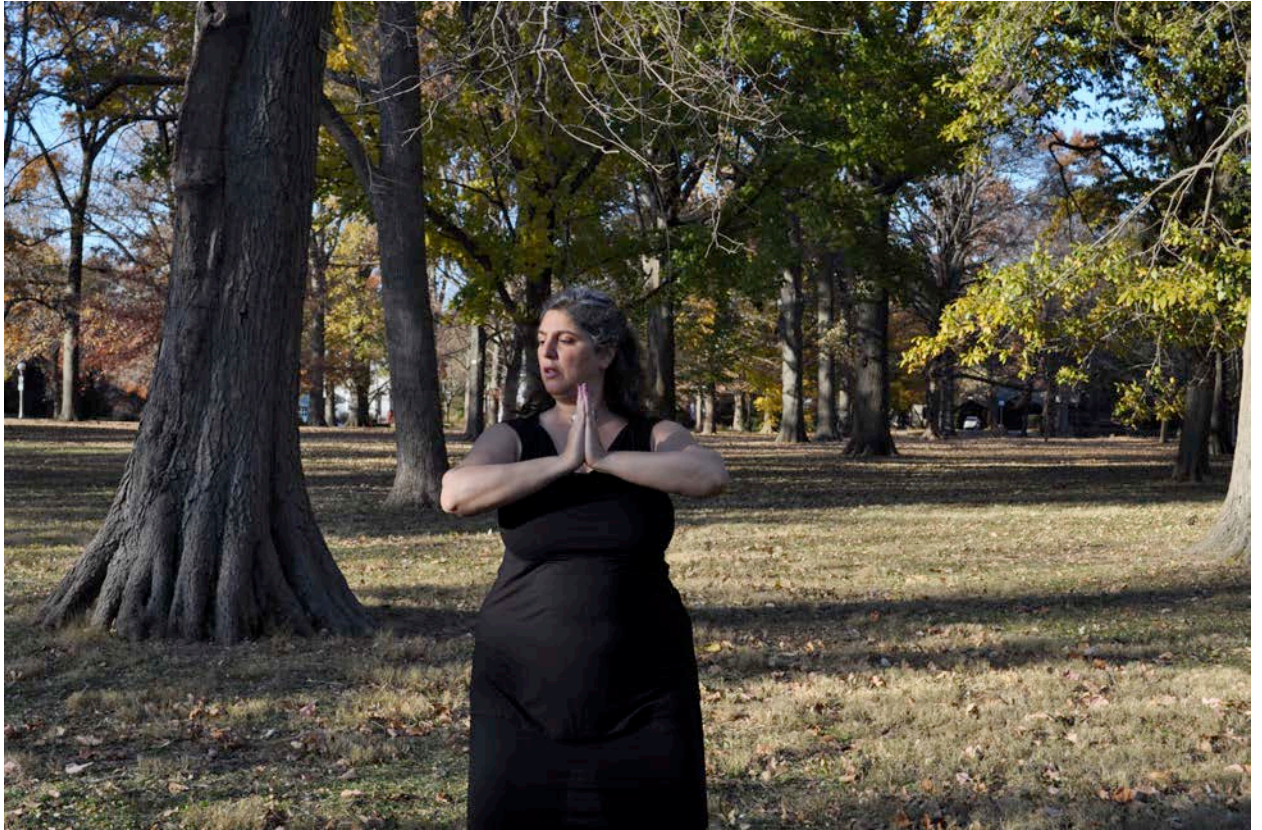
That ‘persian/arab’ part of me that seems more about my mother and my grandmother and my aunts and cousins, than it does about me, but is still me. Perhaps this is because I can understand spoken pharsi^{iv} but not speak it, that I feel muted when it comes to participation in my own culture. Perhaps, this is because I can only find myself in this way by seeing myself in a mirror, that is my memory and interactions with my mother and grandmother, and grandmother’s sisters and their daughters. Since I have started this project my understanding of my Iranian identity has grown a great deal. When I look at persian grammars and thick books of



the poetry of which I cannot read. When I think about my experience of learning to sing with Bahram Sadegian. When I understand what it meant to be a part of the large group of people watching the Iranian Green revolution unfold on the internet, when I watch Shirin Neshat talk about her use of magical realism, when I see a funny video on youtube that a teenager did on being Iranian, when I hear Iranian inflected jazz fusion, I am again afforded another/other mirror/mirror.

I miss my mother. She passed away over 15 years ago. I imagine she would be very interested in what I have to say here. Right here, at this moment and all the moments before, I am making agency in the way that myself as an Iranian Iraqi jewish American subject apprehends her world. I call this project a transnational feminist project and align myself with third world women of color in intellectual circles, and at the same time, I wonder what it would be like to move to New York City and live along side my aunties, who are growing older.

My aunties cared about me and being around their way of being always unlocked something in me, that was there but hidden away. From those first moments when I would enter their houses and smell the sweet scent of the ever present chai on the stove, and the ways we sat and talked, shared and ate, told and supported, in a way that is nothing but 'Persian' and my Aunties to me, is a piece of me that sometimes I feel whispers of, and other times are in complete retreat, and sometimes pound at me wanting to be heard, was then allowed to simply exist (Anzaldua, 1999).



I feel this happens when I am eating a sandwich at my uncle house, there is just something about the way he makes those sandwiches and serves it with cold coke with ice, just perfect, that reminds me of this way of being. The way my other uncle gracefully puts out a cigarette with the heel of his shoe in the Broadway district of New York, or the way my other uncle mixes his paullo with butter and felfell and namak and then picks it up with lavash to eat it. It is in the practice and qualities of presence, where I find myself at home. Its an intangible, and it is lost to me and found to me, in the so many ways of being and certain gestures of my days, and so important to me. There are traces and sometimes I find myself tracing and other times simply being. ^v

I am the daughter of Iranian Iraqi Jewish parents. I was raised in Chicago where the choice was to assimilate. My early years were spent in a neighborhood that was not affluent and I had friends with parents from the Dominican Republic and Japan. I was young when my father explained to me that two of my best friends from the Dominican Republic had to leave their country because their father was part of some kind of political revolution. I understood this at an early age. Here it was hardly noticeable that we were ‘different’ because in this neighborhood everyone was ‘different’. As our family rose in economic standing we moved into two other neighborhoods where we became the different ones.

I open my dissertation that is a performance autoethnography of an understanding of being Iranian Iraqi Jewish American with a look at this book on the yoga of ‘Classical Indian Dance’ written in English, because in my childhood and early adult years, as I stood between myself trying to understand how to make sense of what it meant to have left one culture behind for



another. This leftbehindculture was still there in me, and for me, and calling to me. And at that time, I compared myself to the way I understood people from India. I did this in the same way when I saw ways of being and gesture that seemed somehow ‘mine’ or ‘ours’ when looking at French orientalist paintings of ‘harems’. And somehow, trying to make sense of Barbara Eden’s performance in her poofy pink chiffon top and blonde pony tail at the top of her head, hand crossed over each other, blink ,blink on a persian rug trapped inside her bottle sitting on “Major John’s bureau, and the way she seemed nothing like my short round and beautiful and somewhat serious looking dark haired grandmother, because for me there was the people around me, the news, my family and these traces of that I could find in US culture that reminded me of my own culture, that was always there and somehow always shadowed

I imagined the ways of being and the practices of people in the Indian and other ‘Eastern’ diasporic culture to be similar to my own, and I also imagined myself ‘on a magic carpet ride’ when sitting on rugs at home.



I grew up in a mix blend of family interaction, in a very Iranian cultural context and a US confusion of just who we are. I grew up confused about double cultures and knowing that something was left behind, but never really feeling stereotyped by others, because of my ethnicity. More just erased, more like there was a step that I stood on that others could not see or would not acknowledge.

I would say, “I am Persian, and then try to explain.

My parents are from Iran,’

to mostly blank faces that looked back at me.

As US relations with Iran grew worse in the 1970’s, there was some pressure, some name calling, but by then I had already integrated that fact that we would never fit in with the people that lived in our assimilated European jewish neighborhood.

Though,

Recently,

in the past ten years as the spin about people from the region referred to in the west as the middle east has grown in vast proportions.

My breath gets

caught

in my throat

thinking about it. There is a visceral,

choke

hold



knowing that the enemy, the US fears are
a whole region
of
people
that look like my family?
that could be my family?
that are my family?
Me?

I am curious,
curious,
curious, as I as,
as I
joke,
boarding a plane,
telling the airport security
man in LA,
when he reads my name off of my passport,
red, white and blue born in the USA.

As I joke loudly,
telling him,
that's an Iranian name,



my family is from Iran,
and he looks at me a little shocked,
and waves me on, trying to forget what I told him.
When all I did was state my ethnicity.

The space for airport security was horrendously small, and four young men who appear to be some kind of rock stars get waved through quickly, while the elderly man in front of me struggles to get his shoes off and a couple with children and Mexican passports look very worried as they are stopped. I curse as I take my shoes off and notice that the bins have advertisings from Zappo's.

The man is shocked but not as shocked

As

Airport security

Taking extra time to

Question

Korean

Looking grandmothers

Look at me when

When I am detained

Trapped in a small plexiglass

Cubicle

Waiting to be searched

Because the
Hairpins in my hair
Set off the security
Alarm
Frustrated and
Freaked
I say to the tall young
Tough faced
African American security guard
Who is holding me up.
Is this about race?
And his face
Gets confused and angry and I say
“My family is from the Middle East”
and then he understands.

I come home to the Midwest to the small smart University town I live in.

A few days after the 911 attack a handsome professional man I know who is from North Africa put US flag decals on his car so that he would feel more secure on his drive through a small patch of the heartlands to a town, a few towns, over to where he worked.

A few days after the 911 attacks, it was dusk, and I was walking, and I stopped at light and stood next to two big guys in their twenties, I am always careful when walking, as it grows dark, but

these guys looked at me afraid. I wondered if this face, my face, was now somehow being read as Arab.

This face, my face, that had no real remarkable noticed ethnic quality a month ago.

So much change, in such a short time, readings and rereadings.

I experience my first obvious case of being racially profiled by a manager at the bank, a few months ago.

I know that there is a chance that because I am writing this piece for my dissertation, I could be placed on a list somewhere. I study the erasure of my ethnic meanings because of empire, and I study the critical race theory of the recent racializing of my people. But being from Iranian/Iraqi ancestry and doing this will may put me on a special list.

During the Obama vs McCain election during a McCain townhall meeting, a woman told McCain that she was afraid because Obama was an Arab. And McCain answered, “obama is not an arab, he is a good man like myself.”

Not an arab, a nice man

not an arab=a nice man

Not an arab, a nice man like myself. I’m not an arab, I’m a persian, well, one quarter Arabic, if you count that region my grandma is from as Iraq, who is ‘arab’ to these people anyways, these Americans?

I’m an American.

Watch me as I devour myself.

In loyalty

To the flag.

But first flame broiled and skewered

Like so many

Kabobs

Sold by the countless arriving immigrants

On the New York City Streets.

And so how does this all hold together in the context of this time lapse movement experiment?

The “Yoga of Indian Classical Dance” was written by a woman who went to India and got a guru and learned these practices, she went through many initiations.

There is something complex and simply curious about this to me, and it reaches to me to reflect on my own experience of somehow imagining that some small observable in the US part of Indian Culture could lead me to myself.

For the improv practice related to this chapter. I will work with a variation of a posture presented in this book, first having ‘warmed up’ through various somatics or improv practice, then I will move through the postures using particular improv protocols that experiment with presence and knowing and relationship. What will the photos of this performance autoethnography movement tell us? I don’t believe this is important, that the work has been done and presented is. As I do this work I will have insight about my relationship to the world with regards to this subject, I will

not state these insights but certainly they will be included in this work as it moves along. I present these photos with care and a nervousness about ‘using’ a protocol of movement that belongs to specialized and localized cultures and that has been so generalized. In presenting this movement/gesture, I do so in the spirit of a soft inquiry into this aspect.

Prelude Three-Embodied

We approach, we interpolate, we are included

I make a mark

In time and space.

Beyond signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the culture: but our intimations of exceeding the barrier of boundary-the very act of going beyond-are unknowable, unrepresentable without a return to the present which, in the process of repetition becomes disjunct and displaced. The imaginary of spatial distance-to live some how beyond the border of our times-throws into relief the temporal social difference that interrupt our collusive sense of cultural contemporaneity. The present can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or bonding with the past and the future, (Bhabha, date, pg4)

no longer a synchronic presence our proximate self-presence, our public image, comes to be revealed to its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities. Unlike the dead hand of history of history that tell the 'beads' of sequential time like a rosary seeking to establish serial, causal connections, we are now confronted with what Walter Benjamin describes as the blasting of a monadic moment from the homogeneous course of history, "establishing a conception of the present as the "time of the now". (Bhabha, date, pg 4).

It is in this sense that the boundary becomes the place from which something begins its presencing in a movement not dissimilar to the ambulant, ambivalent articulation of the beyond that I have drawn out: 'Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening way of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks....the bridge gathers as a passage gathers as a passage that crosses'. (Bhabha, date, pg 5).

I am a painter.

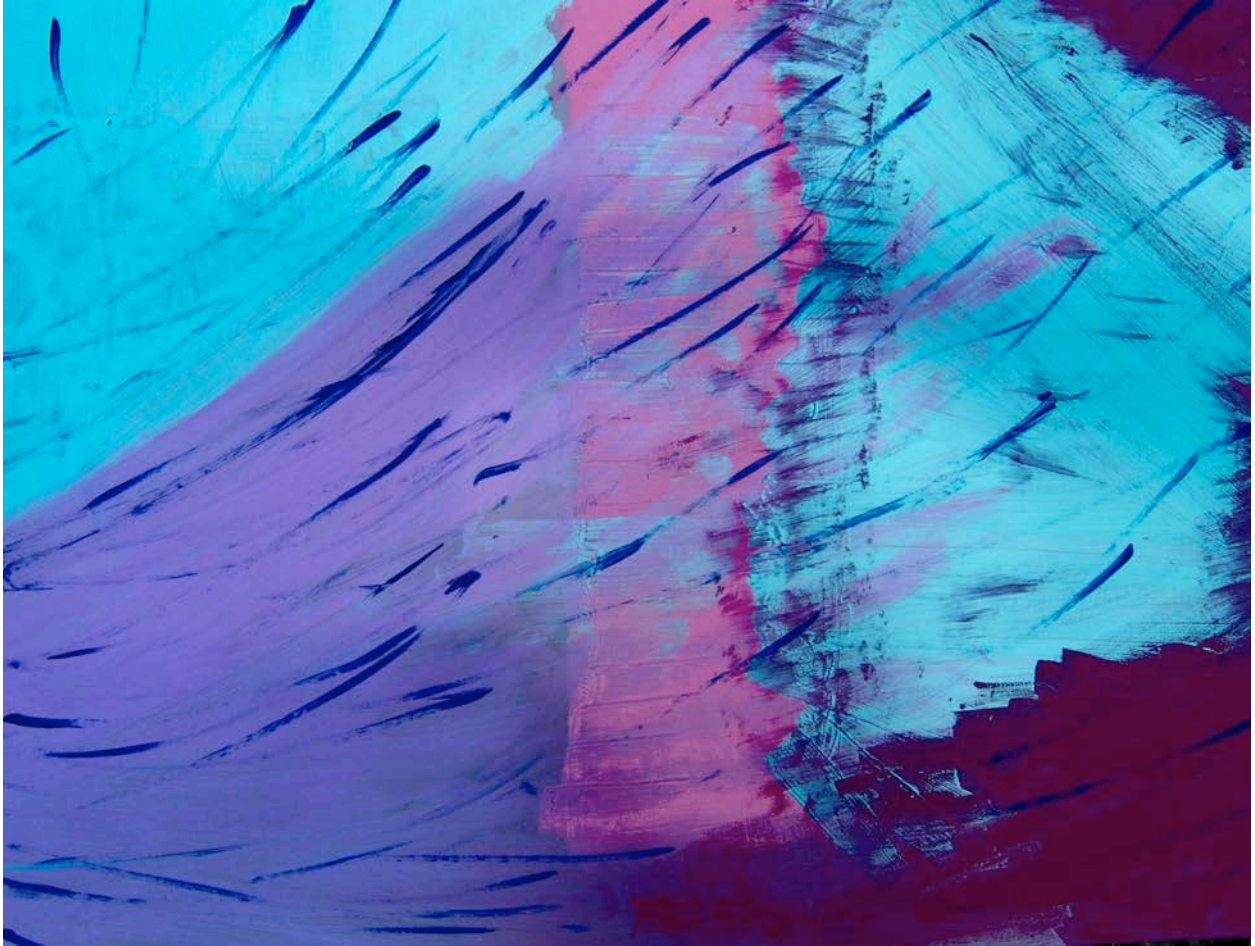
I let my body move itself into these worlds of form and color

The quality of time and direction, energy

Are gestures

Captured in shape

When I write I use contact with my own felt sense to help guide me in finding my
language^{vi}.





When the war on Afganistan began I made these peace signs and gave them away. People wore them on their coats, put them on their windows and on the doors of their houses. Each one was a little prayer. (In the hardcopy of the dissetation, the photo/reproduction on the next page is accompanied by a small handpainted peace sign, that is pasted on the page. They are part of a series of small peace signs that I painted using my hands as a brush. The peace signs are painted on square pieces of mylar that about the size of the palm of my hand.)



Prelude Four-Protest Signs, Multitudes

We protect, we protest























Chapter Two: Words that Matter: Bodies in Space

Did you read it?

Yes.

Where did you read it?

I read it in the air.

Intention

It feels as if we are at a critical juncture as people on earth.

Perhaps, we are and perhaps we aren't,

but most certainly, if we want

the world to be liveable

for both people, and whatever else

we may have concern for

we might,

pause,

at the way that we approach

the kind of work cultural studies people do.,

we might ask,

What good can we as cultural studies scholars contribute?

Can we contribute at all?

Is thinking, knowing and saying helpful?

I think so.

Is showing helpful?

Is performing helpful?

Perhaps,

And a larger question

To consider

is

Where is it that we think we are going with all of this?

Where are we going in this field?

How can what we do as scholars and cultural workers be valuable?

Where are we going as a world?

As the many worlds within worlds?

Constantly shifting and changing.

What could be the role of cultural studies be ?

when the need for positive change and direction is so
great?

Do we as cultural studies scholars and cultural workers want to,

Work to simply repeat ourselves in the system?

Or do we want to have an impact?

How could this impact be best made?

Introducing Introduction-Flipping the Book (break in*broken form)

Writing this dissertation, I wished to have certain approaches read from write to left, as one would read a book written in French or English, and that the reader would be able to turn the book around and be able to read it from left to right, for other approaches, as one would read a book in Hebrew or Pharsi

This like so many of the variations I would want to have in this dissertation, I am sure will not be possible. The University lays out specifics about the formatting of the dissertation, that sometimes take finishing graduate students weeks of works before deposit. So no words running off different ends of the pages and no book being written from two directions. I invite the reader to imagine it may have been written in this manner, what this could mean, and how the lack of the ability to do this conducts an absence of a formal element that limits meaning.

Farsi is my first “language”. I understand Pharsi, I can speak very very simple pharses in Pharsi but this language was my first. English is my second language (I understood, spoken, sang and wrote). Hebrew is my third language (I learned to read, sing and understand (only a little)). My mother mixed her Pharsi with English. My father mixed his Pharsi with Hebrew. I learned French in high school, and went to France during University. After a semester, I could get along relatively well. And when I came home to my grandmother’s house in the states I confounded my Arabic, Pharsi and English speaking Grandmother, by trying to speak Pharsi, when only French came out.

For me, flipping the book feels like a natural thing to do. When I was ten, it was funny to me that you would read books in different directions, by eighteen and used to books, all kinds of books, it was normal.

This dissertation is about flipping the book, or what it means when you cannot, or when you must, you simply must flip the book, or else you can count yourself out of the game (citizenship). And what it means when you have to flip the book. Or what it is when you are reading out of two or three parts of the book at the same time in different directions. In one game, out of another, or playing a few or many at the same time. When staying in one game means, what you need to do to hold onto the roof over your head. Or what it is to be following meanings as they run off the map, that they belong on or how it is not really a map, at all but something that lives and breathes along with you . And how often you run into dead ends, not knowing which language to translate your experience into.

It is about the leavings and comings, of me and my family in so many ways. It is about the cracks and fissures that happen when the book doesn't get flipped when it needs to, and the vast and complex and sometimes lush thing that grows in these times and places.

We are talented and nimble people (number note footnote: differential consciousness Sandoval), those of us who move to survive, and, sometimes, there is a special challenge and a special joy in being able to move back and forth between worlds. Sometimes it is a privilege. And a many times it is difficult and unfair. My parents came to the States by choice, but many people travel between nations, not by choice.

For those people who are rushed out or pushed, or forced, the situation can be dire, but for all of us who have moved, or who move, especially when cultural power can act, flipping the book as a must. And sometime the book only is written in one direction, or it least it has to seem this way. And sometimes you are asked or told to only write the book in one direction.

Like this one.

If I could make this book one where you could flip the book it would read from left to right, about orientalism, politics, and social organization and and from right to left, about performance ethnography that use movement method, presence and voice....it is important to imagine this for a moment, because to become sometimes, to become, we have to only use our imaginations.

On the Prairie in the Center of the Cornfields, The Occupants of this Land, Disanimate

On the Prairie in the Center of the Cornfields

The stories that are real and the stories that are not.

On the prairie in the center of the country

that wields its influence on the earth through strict streams of services

rendered in lines determined by manipulating numbers

and military might

in a modernity

rendered flat from controls based in code,

after a pointedly cold and hard winter,

spring has occurred in it glories of rain and sun,

shadows and light.

Collectively

we come together

some of us

leaving the deep

water for dry shore







barely making it to land
before we stop to rest.
Others fly high above in the air,
Marking patterns over territory,
some come on foot
but all of us
are waiting for the new moment to be born.

Whatever it is
that will be born
now after these eight years,
we cannot anticipate
but it comes clothed in messages
of liberation that reverberates hope
around the world.^{vii}

This change reverses
Symbolically
the disclusion of many people from the notion of
who is included in life liberty and the pursuit of happiness
from the doctrines of the Europeans during colonization

Should we have hope?

Does an overturning of a racist code signal any kind of change?

Can things stay the same after this kind of change?

I am exhausted from the corruption.

Long ago an idea of a free liberated humanity

was stated and this very flawed idea

did not include everyone in its notion of humanity

and this change takes us back to that moment.

But will it be repaired?

The Occupants of this Land

And now the occupants of this land spring back to life at the beginning of April. I hear not quite so many motorcycles riding down the roads and more ambulance sirens than I am used to for spring but still we come out in droves. Some more slowly than others, some still wrapped in more clothes than they need, covered from top to bottom in layers tentatively breathing in the warm spring air. We come with more lines on our face than we had before....

On this particularly sunny afternoon I am outrunning the beat of my heart on my bicycle turning the corner into middle age. I fear the crinkles of skin as I one, two, three quick heartbeat heat up on my face, making it to the edge of town and then beyond onto the earliest scrap of the prairie. As the sun beats brilliantly down on this early April day I look out onto the vast sky and the low land and I think our spring after bush is occurring on the prairies. I pass the two more into middle age women that I know walking almost as quickly as I ride on my bike and notice the tall shadows of another woman hot in her shades and headphones with her black dog licking the edge of the prairie with its turns and curls like ocean laps on the land. She is cool I think, I could ask her out.

And here today on the prairie, I think it is not only spring that has sprung, but in the glory of black pop culture, in moments of a rising chord structure our Mr President Obama has come to save the day no matter how warrior and empire like he seems. There is no relief like the one I feel knowing that the days of Bush and the blatant lies have disappeared. This moment is something you can't afford not to be smart about, and people are not. Some people think Obama is a great spiritual man, and I think he is a politician, but the fact is that the power with which he

has come upon us brings a different set of chills to this 46 year old woman pre menopausal hot/cold body. And for us, we wake up finally from this nightmare of a country split in two, of wars fought on layers of lies.

But what we wake up to is an incredible mess.

This former president forsake the live of everyone to go about his foolish business, there is no need to fictionalize this truth.

The condition that we are all left in, from right to left, is unquestionably negative, and I look upon this moment with fear and trepidation. People have lost their homes, their life savings, their children's lives, in a war, their own well-being to a system that was pushed to the limits of graft and corruption, and finally began its journey to collapse. All during this time what we knew of ourselves in the various understandings of ourselves as subjects of a democracy, has been decimated and calcified.

I work on 'researching' my own Iraqi/Iranian United Statesian identity, watching what this means during the Bush administration has been incredible, and has left me incredulous. The layers upon layers of foisted reality through media has made the gap of understanding between the Middle East region and the United States like two ends of a canyon with only a high wire between them. This high wire being the white streaks that military planes in their wake, as they move through the air, or the tracks that jeeps leave in the mud, and the trails of movement of military personnel (troops) and journalists as they shuttle themselves back and forth to site....or the people who leave there to leave or return there to return.

My story is of a family who left there to leave and stayed here to live. The trail my parents made in their early twenties is another one of those highwires. I am person..a Persian person, I believe

it would be zaneh iruni, an Iranian woman in Farsi, I would write parts of this dissertation in Farsi if I could....but Farsi the language I grew up understanding first, lives so far on the edge of my consciousness. The Arabic that is my Iraqi grandma's language, is remembered more for the smart and sweet faces and loving winks, that she used when she spoke to us in the language. So far from the way speakers of the Arabic language are generally portrayed in the US media today.

Disanimate

Last night I went to bed thinking about the writing of this dissertation. I thought I would from now on, think of my dissertation as a living entity of its own, that I was allowing to grow.

Something that had its own knowledge, its own logic, its own way of organizing itself.

The writing of the dissertation has reorganized the way I live in my apartment, the way I live as a body, the way I live in relationship with other people.

Certainly, it has its own life force.

Last night, I wondered if I should consider my dissertation an animate or inanimate object. This lead me to think about if my computer was an animate or inanimate object.

I realized that my dissertation is of me,

Is it me?

I wondered if it is only an object once it is printed out.

It is certainly the object of my attention, but since it is made be me, from me, is it really an object, an object of my attention?

I wondered if only the paper part of it was an object.

I wondered if it was a non-object.

I understand that I need it to finish school, which would influence my status, which is a part of intangible culture, or the culture of relationship. I realize that because it (the dissertation, it), is about expanding my understanding and relationship to the world, it serves as a bridge between me and the world. I wonder then is my dissertation the world, or is it me?

I realized it didn't much matter if my dissertation was inanimate or animate,

that I would relate to it in a subject to subject manner.

I realized that this was a goal of mine for a long time. To relate to everything in a subject to subject manner (Buber, 1970).

Relationship, Improvisation, On Love

Relationship

How are our situated knowledges created by the qualities and conditions of the situations we face? How do we describe this as it comes down the pipes onto paper, stage, gallery, site, classroom or street corner? What is the real impact of the way we face situations and the quality of those situations on what we know from them, or want to communicate as knowledge later?

Can a part of the way culture works is a as the meanings of all of our situated knowledges as it is produced in relationship? Can culture be thought of, partially, as the communication that occurs as all of our situated knowledge which occur in relationship, leaving in the affect and qualities of presence occurring in this situatedness? I believe so.

But what I really wonder about is how we can leave out that these pieces are written in communities of knowledge? And people who want to learn and people who help them with their learning, committee members and other teachers, colleagues, friends, acquaintances, wonderful children and even mean strangers are part of the way we learn. of what and how we know . The questions come up between us. Between me and other people, between me and the rocks, I step lightly on when I am barefoot running, in my skirt, carrying my shoes, as a break from writing. Between me and the computer or the text, or whatever this dissertation is, the object? of creation...or rather the subject, I relate to in writing. In anycase, the relationships I have with people and things, are what make what is, what is.

Improvisation

We improvise our lives. We improvise our knowledge and it is never separate from the way we live our lives or what happens in them while we are living with others and alone.

Text only has its meaning because of the everyday improvisations we make to bring them to life.

Text, like movement and music scores serve as loose and other times larger reads that inform our moving lives. In this way concepts of money and actual paper money serves as a score as it inscribes the flow of activity with value and resource allocation, in this same way also, the rules of hockey serve as a score for hockey players, or the ways that sidewalks are constructed in a city serve as a score for the improvisation of everyday life our moment to moment creation of meaning, ourselves and our communities (DeCerteau, 1984). My intention is, that here, in this work the importance of these alive, in the moment relationships as “knowledge”, and the ways that the body, as material, produces culture, as presence in relationship will be seen more clearly

On Love

Emilie Conrad says in her essay, “Teaching What I Live,”

After all, healing is mainly a matter of paying attention to the moment, and whatever is going to illuminate the moment is something that can’t be decided in advance. It can’t be made an intention. All I can do is be there-open, listening, sensing. When someone feels honored and respected in his own particular movement, he enhances his access to his own creative healing possibilities. It’s as if each person is reaching into a core of health, a core of sanity.

(Conrad, pg 1, date unknown)

We are mired in love or the absence of it, and even when we are alone we are with each other, and the way we relate to each other and ourselves. And as we improvise our lives, love creates the tension that pulls us backwards and forwards into and out of meaning. This love that we long for, ignore, deny, and feel empty because of a lack of literally make the way we build our world, way we are active, activate, say the word go. Emotions are important, they are life or death , and belief is key to the way we make emotions. How and What we believe, how we know ourselves as we make our way through the world.

It is a remarkable world we live in....there is so much to get caught up in, in social and cultural rules and roles, and all along we are human bodies, that are full of possibility. Our creative and generative abilities as bodies are evident in the millions of ways we have learned to make the world. If one looks at culture and its social, meaning making and material results it becomes evident that the human body's capability for understanding and generating our world is of an astonishing magnitude.

The Grand Finale

I sit somewhat calmly on the floor of my messy apartment listening to some folk rock music on Pandora Well, actually it was folk rock on the Bobby McFerrin station, and then the Manahatten Transfer came on...but I was in a more folk rock music mood and so I changed channels. But of course, first I have to listen to some commercials...ok, finally, the folk rock...hmm....wanted a male voice; change channels again, lets see—

I am hemmed in by the heat of the Champaign/Urbana summer and the need and desire to deliver my dissertation which for the most part, when I get to it, it is a pleasure to write.

My thoughts, my ideas, my artwork, mixed with that of others, the pen in my hand—pages of final product emerging from the computer printer, a culmination of years of study of the things I am passionate about, so much joy and some heartbreak for certain.

When I was in my late twenties I struggled to write, and a friend of mine said to me. I always thought you had to have some adventures and experiences, then you write about it. Now in my late 40's I understand that I have indeed had some adventures and experiences and I am ready to write about them.

The completion of this text has come with much confusion. And one day last May, I realized that I was ready to finish and move on, and later that week my advisor, who I feel lucky to consider a friend said to me, ‘You are ready.’



Who knows how we have these feelings together. But for now in this moment with the right jangly folk rock music playing, in my sweet messy apartment, air conditioning cool, on a sweat in your eyes walking day. Somehow, ready feels just right.

...distances and closeness and the moments that make our memory, and the understandings that build our affect, that somehow become part of how we are

who we are, that make our character, the way that we indeed, live the scripts that the symbols of our everyday live suggest. How do we find ourselves here, together and apart, on the sidewalk, on the subway, on the bicycle, on the couch? and in saying this I do not suggest that we are only character, but that one we that we are realized is by this way that we live the embodiment that the culture suggests, the way that we tune ourselves to the world using what ever it is that method actors use or somatics practitioners use to build themselves onto a body, whatever miracle of materiality that we are, that makes us practice within the embodiment paradigms that the culture suggests in the ways that it suggests to us, the same way that the orchestra or jazz musicians use their whole body to tune into the pieces they play, through the hearing skin, that we are the same way with general lived culture. That the way that the materiality of the body does this plays a profound role in the creation of culture, and whether we speak habitually with a loud voice or a soft one, if this is an individual trait, or more cultural, is not “just affect”, but is Affect, and plays a huge role in the way that we make through process the world around us, and because we can make the world in this way, we have choices in the ways that we make it in this way as well. This is not to say that we are contained only in our bodies, or that this is where we or our



presencing ends, but this is to say that this is a critical point that I would like to stress as my contribution to the literature with this dissertation.

In moments, that seem close and distant, with people who are near or far away, through mediums that translate and transfer, we build a self with the material of the body and this is important. And it is not only layers of meanings with fissures and punctums that we are involved in but layers of feeling or affect that that bring these meanings home to us. Who knows what it means to feel, but it is certain that feeling brings meaning to us.

The Grand Finale

“Ready, get set, go!”

The scene, closing barbeque at the Qualitative Inquiry Congress, its been a good one, lots of friends here and a chance to let your dreams out for a tour. It is an early summer evening, the air is warm and a little sticky. It is at the beginning of a long stretch into an even longer dusk. I’m tired from two days of convention conversation and my best friend’s kids are here, Annaloua and Francisco; along with Francisco and Carmen’s baby girl, Minerva, a three year old mover extraordinaire. The little girl lets her moving be her knowledge. I watch in amazement as she takes on a two block pathway in something like a minute flat- and in curious enjoyment as her father Francisco knows where she is and can get to her in no time’s notice. Distances and Radars, Radiances and Radii, we hold each other still and moving in spaces, still and moving.

So these children I love, Annaloua and Francisco, will travel to distance back to Massachusetts, where I will not see them for, maybe another year, if not longer. And this time I can see that they



have forgotten me some from last year. A lot happens in children's lives, especially when they are seven and five. They are adorable. And so I watch them playing 'outside' on the expanses of lawn and patio, that are meant , to be passed by when walking from one place to the next or patio relaxation for a few minutes after talks. These spaces mostly used for admiring, and giving a sense of relaxation to those who spend a few minutes in tow. The large spaces of well manicured lawn and flowering bush and perfect curved sidewalks give the those who normally pass by a sense of well-being and wealth during their visit to these spots of the University. The kids are tearing it up. The whole place has become their playground.

And it is in these kinds of moments that the beginnings of what we see as possible occur, in small glints and glimmers of promise, of a hand held out.

And I say lets do a running race!

from the sidewalk closest to where we are sitting across the grass to the sidewalk that runs parallel to it, touch the sidewalk with your foot and come back. We start with one foot on the sidewalk and one foot on the grass and we say, "Ready, set go!"

The sidewalk tagging and the ready, set, go, was what I used to do with friends when I was a child. It was one of those decidedly 'american' things I knew how to do. I did it with my playmates at the schoolyard, when I was a child, 'racing' and 'ready set go' were a part of being an American child.



I look at Francisco and Annalua to see if they are with me, and if racing and ready, set, go, still works. I have their attention. They know what I am talking about.

Ready Set Go!

Ready Set Go!

Ready Set Go!

Three races, four races, five races later.

Adult friends join us and soon we are running laughing mass on the lawn. We take a break and Annalua has found a jar and comes up to her mom, Dani and me and says (I know what she is going to say before she says it...I used to...) “I am going to catch fireflies and we will have a firefly festival. “

She disappears for a while and returns later a bit discouraged from her search.

“Mom, I can’t get any fireflies”

“Its ok honey.” Her mom, Dani, is kind, caring and knows her children very well.

Annaloua goes off to play for a while. Later, I find her on the lawn with the other kids and we decide, with a few other grownups to play tag.

It’s a kind of disorganized game of tag with a three to forty six year old age range of skill level and it is fun!

Then Annaloua says to me, “Lets have a Grande Finale.”

“What is that?” I ask.

And some stories are so magical in their truth. And others need magic to bring them closer to truth.



She says, “We will pick a lot of flowers,” pointing to the white flowers that grow with the clover in the lawn. The lawn is covered in them. “We will pick a lot of these,” she said, “then everyone will run to us, then when they get to us, when they get to the line, that is where the grass ends and the sidewalk begins, we will throw the flowers at them.” We start to pick the clover flowers and there are so many of them. We gather handfuls. The kids line up on the sidewalk across the lawn. We ‘rehearse’. We pick more flowers. By then, it is the kids, me, four loving parents and some other grown-up friends. We pick more clover flowers and we are ready for the Grande Finale. A couple of us stand at ‘the finish line’ with flowers in hand. Dani, Annalua’s mom, has her camera at the finish line-and the kids and the rest of the grown-ups have made a line on the sidewalk across the lawn, we are ready for the ‘Grande Finale’.

Ready Set Go!

And this beautiful line of people running and leaping across the lawn and when they reach the sidewalk where we are standing, flowers go up in the air. There is something about the moment of people joyfully and simply running across a lawn to get to the other side that I will never forget. It was more than just fun and less than something dreamt up in the wonderful imagination of a sweet young girl. It was such a simple gesture and so beautiful, these bodies moving across the lawn.

May we always follow in the dreams of the best hopes of our little girls and boys. May we always have moments of safety, joy and pure play.

On so many levels, it is in the spirit of Annaloua’s Grande Finale that this dissertation is written. And that story told, I use the grand finale to continue my dissertation which at this point seems so full of openings, that I am not sure when it will be able to close itself and perhaps, like the

best of the Grand Finales, this work will simply be a series of new openings. A series of questions that beget more questions.

22222222

I read my professor Norman Denzin's book , 'Interpretive Ethnography. I think to myself, "How does he do it?" This whole book is one long essay. There are starts and stops in my reading. I both love and am frustrated by the text. I write back to the book in the margins. As I write this I have sat still for a full hour, the sun has gone behind the clouds, the male voice jangly folk rock music is still playing. It is 11:27 on Friday, June 11. I am writing with my favorite kind of pen, the precise v7, fine point, black ink on steno. It is a new pad. I have paper clipped together the pages on the Grand Finale and I wonder if it is ok for me to take a break or if I will loose my flow

333333

So I commit to reading on about Performance Ethnography in Norm's book that is all marked up and in which he has written in the front cover, "To Desiree. My Favorite", in that trippy handwriting of his. Its scary sometimes, that my handwriting resembles his, like at this moment for example. I am all caught up in the complexities of the use of the ocular in ethnography. Its complicated and gets more complicated. I find a line, " Mimesis is a fraud" . My heart skips a beat. I laugh out loud. "Thank you for the simplicity of that line, I later write to him in an e-mail. He writes back, "You got to have fun!" I write back in agreement. The male voice jangly folk rock is more mellow now, what a good choice of company for this writing.

So now and here before I continue on in a piece that becomes messy and ocular and non-ocular, kinetic and aural, pastiche and montage in a myriad of ways, there are a few things I would like to simply say. Even more simply stated than, “Mimesis is a fraud”, which is only simple in the context of that book.

This dissertation has multiple layers reflecting the places where I have been, am, and wish to be, it talks about where I have known, and a sense of the ways that we know together. There is reflection on affect theory, transnational feminism, postcolonial theory, performance, performance autoethnography and race. It talks about middle eastern Americans at this moment in time, and the apparatus that influence the definitions of this experience. It talks about what else there is, what else makes a life that is not only race, ethnicity and politics. It suggests that there is a way that this all fits together. It talks about how we can define our own experience. It talks about how we power own own experience with our desire and our values and how this matters in the way things are made and the way things happen. It talks about hope and wonder and love embodiment. This dissertation will sometimes seem far too simple and then suddenly complex. It has as much as I can put in into it in the ways that I know about knowing.

It will be about closeness and distance, homes and unhomeliness.

And for the moment if I might state things as clearly as Norm does when he says, “mimesis is a fraud” say a few things as clearly as they seem to me.

1) On Sustainability

It is clear that we have reached a crisis stage globally: ethically, economically and environmentally. The health of the earth, our home, has been a concern for so many years. The environmental sustainability movement is key in providing a way out of the crisis we are in but I believe it does not address issues as its core. As the conditions of the earth shifts, some see the ends of lifetimes, some people do, some environmental systems do, certainly animal and plant species have and will. This is very, very sad and wrong. To make our actions as human's help to sustain and allow the ecosystems of the earth to thrive is an imperative. But I believe that many of the movements to do this leave out a key concept-that human beings are the earth as well. To keep a river clean, alive and life-giving is key but I can't believe that attention to the river need be given at the expense to appropriate attention being given to issues which involve human exploitation and suffering. It is true that if we have not earth to live on what we know as life will be changed, the importance of the issue is not lost on me but when a great deal of attention is given to the saving the lives of polar bears and not enough attention is given to conditions caused by race, class, colonialism, gender discrimination and general exploitation that for some people make their life environments practically uninhabitable, it is very problematic. I suggest that the 'sustainability' movement expand their concept of earth systems to include systems of human survival, interaction and meaning. We need to learn to care about each other, not only, each other, the land, the rivers, the lions and polar bears but also each other, human beings, if we are to survive. I believe that the quality of human life be included in notions of sustainability is a key concept, if we are to survive together as this earth. This includes the way we relate to ourselves. I suggest that the quality of human relationality be included in notions of

ecological sustainability. This is not a new idea but one that I would like to stress as we move further into global crisis, with issues of sustainability taking the forefront.

Many environmentalists fear that the earth will quit and no longer provide us with what we (including the earth and all that inhabit) and others need to thrive. But in so many ways, including the ways that humans interact and provide sustenance to each other.

This has already happened.

2) That as people we have and continue to fail each other. We can listen, hear, care and nurture but we continue to not do this for each other. In this dissertation I will present a situation that seems complicated for all ways I have used to understand it. But at the basis of all of this, I feel we fail each other by choosing to not care and not listen, by prevailing atmospheres of competitions and meanness, of taking and not giving. Of wanting things for ourselves and not for each other, of not trying to understand.

In this world it is a misnomer of the protected to say that we are reaching a crisis point. Those who go hungry, are sexually assaulted or live in a war zone know that the crisis has already been reached over and over again.

Will the crisis become catastrophic? Again, I believe that they already have. So I am not sure what we are talking about when we say, “before it is too late”. For many environmental systems that include people, it is too late, the catastrophe has already happened. Will we find a way to listen and care for each other, instead of against. I know that I do my best. But I do believe that it is up to each of us to leave this earth

better than we found it and this includes the ways that we regard and treat each other in our encounters.

The Return to Land

The Return to Land

To Never Forget..

This is a dissertation makes a direct appeal to care and love.

I urge you.

The time is now.

To Never Forget

That we can

Live Together

In joy

And in peace

Ethnography Talks

Ethnography talks about what happens in our world. We delineate the nature of the subject by the way she is written into ethnography.

It should never be taken for granted who the human is and our potential together.

The active labor when writing ethnography should be to decide how we would like to portray the human in our ethnography. In this way the ethnography serves as an intervention. An intervention. To make a piece of culture to tell who we are and who we want to be. To show our possibility. This is our hope.

Who is the human being? What are we capable of? What is our potential? This can be imagined before and understood as an ethnography is written.

This includes who we want the human to be or our wish for we/us as humanity.

The piece is written in this spirit. I believe that we are, indeed, human, terrible wonderful, fantastic and capable creatures: that our potential to create is enormous and our potential to love is even greater. I believe that that all harm that comes at the hands or intent of human is simple evidence of how far we can go to solve things, to make things work, to arrive.

That we are made of love,

because this is indeed the antidote to suffering.

That we are made of love.

Because there really

is no other choice

That we are made of love

Because that is

The

Choice

That theLeft

Hand

Offers

With herSongs

And The

Tibre of

Her Voice.

How to configure the subject to reflect this in ethnography is part and parcel of the action of the following inquiry.

It by no means is perfect in its approach.

We are

We are together

We are bodies

We are love?

Love, we thrive in its presence, we suffer in its absence and only love can heal what its absence has created

Our greatness is in the face that has softened

We return to land, it has been a sad time.



Now, taste the rich sweet and sour of cherries and feel happy.

The extent that this work reflects of the fantastic, the magical, the wonderful, the possible, all rely on this return.

That we can again find our goodness, and walk without fear or the need to harm. It is possible. I am sure of it.

We are resistance

We are resilience

We are (acceptance)

It has been a dark and sad time in the United States, full of sadness and grief, harm and greed.

Now we heal.

It is a difficult world-the human is a creature full of the potential to create the joyful and the tragic. Affect is so strong an element in our potential.

And the way the story is told, tells the next story.

To bring us to a good place takes a belief in what has yet to be understood, perhaps a belief in the fantastic. The form of this dissertation reflects this. The fantastic, the wonderful, along with the terrible puts the sweet back in to it, allows us to feel safely in awe of each other, and a world that gives and takes back, sometimes taking more than it gives and sometimes gifting so kindly and largely and continues to thrive despite incurable (incredible) odds. Let this work be another piece however small or large to central project

of making it, of somehow making it, making it right and making it left. She left and at the same time she has arrived.

Chapter Three: The Triptych

Ttiptych: Part One-joy is our safe harbor

(Hope for a method of Hope)

“The World goes from bright to brilliant to luminous, so that for brief seconds we see what really matters”

Julia Alvarez

Lets move into the future together.

Aware of the many small rhythms within...

To survive unhomliness

To thrive beyond it.

To practice a method, to sustain a kind of life

as part of a large methodological shift in qualitative inquiry that is now occurring...

I want to practice a method that informs us in a way that will not only sustain our living

but one so we may do justice to our

resistance and

memory,

that which

syntheisizes and recombines

elements

into moving life.

For a heart,

which refuses to quit ,

no matter how low it has gone,

and in loving memory

when for some when these hearts give out.

for the love of color

for the pleasure of taste.

A method that teaches us to live our lives,

and let, and help others to live theirs.

For a method that teaches us celebration,

And celebrates audacity, truth-telling, and resilience.

For a method that teaches us joy.

And sometimes, when you write, and the earth cracks

its

self

open, for you,

and the people, you love the most, no matter how far away arrive in the rooms, with you, at the same time you yourself have arrived.

Arrived, arrived, arriving.

And the world takes on a vitality, it never had before, and there is the ground you need beneath your feet.

A method,
one that shows us how
we can be more
and how less can be
overcome,
and how devastation
can be reversed.
One that shows us
how to leave what needs to be left
And save what
needs to be saved.

And breathe life back into what we need.

And resuscitate that which lets us
love.

One which teaches us

Faith

shows us that giving, living and loving is first, above all

...or perhaps, only second to dreaming

with our eyes

open or closed.

For a method that teaches

how to let good music

go to your bone

and makes the bad music

dimmer and dimmer

until it disappears.

For a method that doesn't need to be rationalized

but declared.

For a method that works, or doesn't work yet,

but might work. (hope)

For a method that makes the activity

of the gathering and creation of knowledge

feel safe for the poor and un-privileged.

For a method that isn't mining, taking.

For a method that gives,
that loves,
that creates new spaces
where people can thrive.

For a method that makes room
for us
to find the kinds of
nourishment that we so seek
and need
to continue in our humanity and our pursuits

A method that is soft in its criticisms
And strong in its understanding
Of what it means to live
In the soft
Flesh
Of
The
Body.

For a method that allows for new kinds of accuracies.

For a method that enables all kinds,
of bad spelling
and hard to understand word combinations.

For a method that lets the bright light
what is hurt.
In a warm dark moist safety

For a method that lets hurt
be safe,
so it may heal.

For a method that allows the healing
to continue and continue.

Grow.

For a method that
encourages
collective action,
love, and support

for each each others dreams.

For a method that allow us to believe there can be more,
that the solutions are
right
at the edge of the next corner
or
in the next breath.
or within
the smallest quality of the next kind of
change.

slowly to the left,
quickly to the right.

in the quality of our knowledge,
in the quality of the way
that we know and approach,
apprehend.

For a method that enables change in a way of being
before the change in the world.

For a method that embodies.

For a method that enables
the strength and language,
so that we will spill
out into the streets
in assemblies of change.

For a method
that will
make
us
softer
and
louder.

Softer and stronger

More
understanding
and
more
demanding

For a method

that

will

let

us

feel

the

tilt

of

the

earth.

and the humour in science.

Science sleeps a long slumber

of self righteous.

For a method that is much more than a false science designed to show us the pieces of someone else's life, so they can be understood in a way that they can be controlled.

For a method that allows us to grow and be who we want to be, and make this space for others.

A method that creates a mutual space.

A method that lets your cells sing.

A method that makes the dearest wishes, feeling and thoughts of children

matter

most.

A method

that

holds

the making

of a world

where all children

are safe and thriving as its first goal.

A method that meets this standard for the child within each of us.

A method that unravels us.

And knits

Us

Back

Together.

more than methods to produce knowledge simply because these are the methods that are
used before,

more than methods that must include justification just to move away from the old method.

Just because that method was there in the first place,

more than methods steeped
in traditions of elitism.

Look at how we see

Look at how we see,
how can we see more, how can we see differently,
how can we see so it matters, makes things better,
brings to the pursuit of life.

Listen to how we hear,
how can we hear differently, how can we see so it matters, makes things better,
brings us to the pursuit of life?

Sense how we feel
how can we feel differently, how can we feel so it matters, makes things better,
brings us to the pursuit of life?

Understand how we know,
How can we know differently, how can we know so it matters, make things better,
Brings us to the pursuit of life?

Life with its many colors with, its richness of expression,
with the hope

of its always constant ability to set things right in a heartbeat.

See through love. See as love. See. Know. Feel.

believe

we weave ourselves into and out of what we believe.

sing yourself into existence

Speak your word/world

Articulate Your Desire

From where?

From here to there

From here to there

and from here to there again

articulate your desire,

make here.

Hear,

Make hear

The time word

Time word

Word time

Time of word









(If I had a Daughter I would Name Her Celebration)

And she encouraged the falling of the rain, with the taps of her feet, the song on her lips, the sway of her hips and the snaps of the fingers of her upraised arms, the way she would her favorite jazz band. Her belly full of warmth and her heart overflowing. The subtle tick tock in the background of the music was her favorite sound. She was older and she decided that her faith would bring her a child and that she would name her daughter, "Celebration".

With a large ability for friendship she moved forward.
Knowing that her world would never be empty again.

skin, nine layers

she was lonely for

wonder

so she watched

forty sunrises and sunsets

untill

she

was sure

that

she understood

that the edges of the earth were round

and she could feel



its

rotation

on

her skin.

the love in music

she understood the love in

music

she asked

why

coming to

her

own

hurt

like the

knife

would/wound

cut

so difficult

the play

Of subtle

Vibration



Between

Us.

of it had become so shrouded,

and the way

it had been

And why

somehow the world

had been covered in

mediocrity.

She filled

she filled her lungs

with

full

rich

breath

Adventure

There was only time for adventures now

And always

With

joy



With very
alive,
imaginative,
children
And with the three most
beautiful
and
kind
men
who flanked
Her side.
They
had grown
into the men
they
were
by trails and trials
never tired
never weary, often wary
feeling
god
when it really hurt
and



love
when
it did not.
like dancers swaying
on their toes to the
balance of
their
own
heart
beats.

A deep commitment

And a deep commitment
to
life
by
first
admitting
that they knew
nothing
and one
by his complete commitment to heat
they



practiced until
they
were the sweetest
and kindness
and most virile men she
could ever imagine
together, the four
carried the
corners
of the
earth
in the tip of their fingers.

Know that you know

Know that you
know nothing
One said to me
Only love
Said the other
And the third
Simply



laughed

till

he

fell

on

the

ground

While

crying

at the same time.

His children

were leaving home.

And he wondered if

he

had

taken too much

for

letting

them

love him

His

children

One his left hand

and the other his right.

eyes open

Keep

Your

eyes

wide open

You

never

know

what you will see

She said to him

Her

Hand

Perched

On his

Cheek.

Imagine you life in the most wonderful way.

She became

a doctor of letters

And taught that

to be

Just
and good was
the only truth
worth
knowing,
and
that and that the art of make-up
and
play
were
really
the only art they had
and if

He called
her at midnight
from the cemetery
Under the round
Moon
And
The drizzling rain
To tell her he had been reminded of her
and

that he had been hurt
And cried that maybe he had done something
Wrong
He laid on the grass inside a puddle
Of fog that envelope both him and her
Her and him, her and her
I have always been a woman
He said with a grin
I am going to Paris
She said
You go to Singapore
I'll go to London

But then she remembered the Parisian mathematician
Who she loved the most
That lived around her corner
In her small town in the middle of
The middle of nowhere
Who meaning had been lost under layers
Of grown tricolor color corn and soft white
Animal milk
And decided once more to stay home

She remembered the man
Of the stars and moon
Who had blazed his own trials on the
Soft earth of the moon
And how finally after
So many years of honor, fantasy and sharp
Edges, he had grown permanently afraid.
She found the answer for him in the configurations
Of the pebbles around her humble
Home and went to search for him
To given him the answer he needed

Everyone she knew in this small town
Had become her mother and father
Because she lost one father before he was even born
And her mother the moment she met him

But when she needed her parents
She became confounded as to which of these
Hundreds of people would give her sustenance

And so with her friends
The glorious men

She laughed until she fell onto the ground and cried
Large tears at the same moment

And after the animals were loaded off of the ark
Two by two and life began again
They went to watch the sun rise and set
In morning and evenings
As the velvety moss that
Grew between bricks
Carpeted the entire land

Locations

She had watched and watched and loved and loved
Till she found a woman that was both so elegant and ghastly
That there was no explanation
And she watched till the horror overwhelmed her
At how this person knew only herself in the world
And would crush crush anyone who loved
Her
Leaving burnt ash at the side of her lovers tongue, lips and brow bones.
She watched this woman, till she became so afraid
That she could no longer breathe

There was something built onto the inside of this woman
That had solidified
Till there was nothing but scorn

On the inside of her
The metal had taken over
And it gave her skin a hard shiny tinge
Her smile a thin angry curve
Even as she trembled with desire

She was indexing and cross referencing
Her nightmares
In case they would be of us
She said to them
I am not afraid of you
I am already afraid of everything
And this fear became her
Cloak of protection
And tears became her veil of company
And she shunned the falseness of those around her

And was indeed wiser
Then she decided she wanted to live

So she named all the things that were ugly
And stared them in the face one final time
And moved on.

Triptych: Part Two-we are, we become (a Story)

In¹ 1962 my mother arrived from Iran to the United States. She carried this suitcase.

Now, I sit with this to prop up my feet when I write at my desk

I sit with this to prop up my feet when I walk

always moving.

always moving

I have lived here in Champaign Urbana for the past 15 years,

hardly leaving, yet always moving.

space here for me has been confining-never having the room to

expand into myself....

so the problem how to inhabit my body fully.

So I became a performance artist who studied the way that

culture disciplines (and helps to generate) the perceptive system of the body, by

using and developing movement practices that pull away

at

the

character armour of our sensation

I change rapidly, the

shape of my body

and the ways that I understand.

(the way I move, the way I sound, the way I hear, the way I know)

I remember very clearly being a little girl living

In betweentwo worlds.

The one where we spoke English anddid American things

like eat cookies and sit in a circle in nursery

¹ Parts of this section have been published in the journal, "Qualitative Inquiry" under the title, "Transgressive Borders: A Performative Diaspora in Three Movements", May 2009, Volume 15, no. 5. The publisher agrees to the reuse of this text.





school
and the one of my home,
where we spoke a different
warmer
language
and the aroma of tea brewing
was always in the air.

(clank, toc, toc, clink was the sound the metal spoons made
along the glass estecan the grown-ups drank tea from, sitting in a circle
in the living room talking, little glasses with mini spoons,
I learned to serve tea, carrying the big tray, a little girl carrying the big
Tray)

When I came to graduate school I made performance pieces about the
language of moving.

When the Iraq War began
I watched television
To see if the landscape
Looked
anything like the landscape
my mother grew up in.

I also, talked to my sister on the day
the world trade center building came down. She was 40 blocks
north in Mid-town,
before she hung up the phone with me told me she was going to join her colleagues



at the corner of the block,
to watch the buildings come down.

When I was around five years old,
I went with my mother to one of her friend's house.
The Abassi family,
even then, my mom's
Persian friends seemed exotic and distant to me,
Also, I very well knew that
I belonged here
in these homes
and my lives
outside of these places,
was where I would always be an alien.

At the Abassi's house,
a woman sat with my mother,
as she drank a very small cup of thick coffee.

She turned the cup
upside down
and let it dry
while they continued to talk.

She picked the cup up and told my mother a few things very softly.

My mother began to cry.

On the way out of the house I asked my mother why she was crying.

She said that the woman who read her coffee cup,
said that people she loved very much would be coming
from far away for a long stay.



I remember my mother asking with her eyes
if it was her mother that would be coming.
The woman said, perhaps, with her shoulders.

Five years later my grandmother and grandfather
came from Iran for good to live in New York City.

When the Iraq war began.
I decided I wanted to make a piece about it.
For this I wondered about spaces.
The spaces close and near that made up the events of this war.

The only thing I saw from here,
were the young soldiers with their heavy duffel bags on the bus,
looking very ready to go, or on route to
going. The reactions of the people I came in contact with in my daily life, the installation of extra
US flags.

The rest were just a series of images, the White House, the city of Bagdad as it was being
bombed at night though infared night light, and images of the dead being counted in numbers,
and so many more, and I was disturbed by the idea
that so significant an activity was being only understood
through a series of imaginaries, I longed for a solid. So I filled three rooms of a chapel with
objects that reminded me of my Iraqi maternal grandmother's home. Homes, was the
question, the gesture to me, this, the very real sense of my
grandmother's home, along with questions about the way images mean places, was the theme of
these three rooms

My grandmother, my mom's mom came to settle in Queen's, New York

Then our whole life changed.



We went for visits from Chicago to New York
twice a year to my grandma's
and we would see our uncles
and cousins
and great aunts
and uncles,
all from my mom's side of the family, a total of about 50 people

that I newly knew and newly loved
were my sudden family who
lived in the space
of a few blocks around Queen's Boulevard.

I was ten and we were Jewish and Iranian and Iraqi.
And my grandmother would make great big deigs of Persian rice
to feed our large family for the Passover Seder.
We spoke Pharsi, prayed in Hebrew
and my grandma and her sisters talked to each other
in Arabic.

I could pray in Hebrew,
I had learned how in the Ashkenazi neighborhood
I was growing up in, in Chicago.
And I understood Pharsi,
so I sat quietly and listened
and listened,
till my ears grew round with the sound of my
family.



My grandmother spoke her mysterious Arabic language,
and I caught a few phrases, "enshala", anani (my eyes),
she would say to us her little grandchildren,
while grabbing us in a big hug.
No talking to each other, just love for a while.
Then once my grandmother learned English,
I would speak in English,
which was much easier for her to understand than speak,
and she would speak in Pharsi, which was much easier to for me to understand than speak.
We were so happy when we figured out this solution.

After installing three rooms for a one day show,
and finding
a place to store my things when it was done,
I promised myself, that besides for my movement pieces,
I would only make very small pieces of artwork from then on.
Afterall what was I going to do with four large glass globes and 20 foot long paper banners in the
future.

For now it is all stored in my office.

But what about when I move?
What about if I have to move?
What will I do with all of this stuff?

This stuff that is my meaning. And if it were up to me, I'd fill rooms and rooms of installation
spaces, making spaces, making meaning, gleaning lost meaning from spaces I've made.

I make art compulsively,
hands always making symbols holding changes,
but the process of storing and saving is just too hard..

...so

now I promised myself to only make pieces which can fit in
the palm of my
hand, so that, even if I made a thousand of them, they would
only fill one
suitcase.

My mother was always so very sad when we left our visits to
my grandmother's

house. And I was always so very amazed at the transformation
she made when
we all arrived.

My mother who always worked so very hard
translating our lives
in Chicago into one where our culture could work, and with
so little money and
often very alone, was suddenly at ease. She lounged around
her mother's house in her favorite housecoat talking and
laughing and relaxing until it was time for her to dress to
visit with family. Family afternoons were simply visit time,
as we went from home to home joining circles of talk about
things not so important to very important. My mom had a glow
about her on those days and it was almost as if she
transformed herself into a different person, one who lived
easily, while we were on these trips. Most sadly, I remember
how this beautiful self of hers would fold up and disappear
inwards, as we would start to return home. Driving the route
through the Lincoln tunnel into Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio,
Indiana, till we reached our little home on the North
Side of Chicago.

Those trips were so important to me. I remembered every turn on the highways and roads and anticipated how I would feel when we arrived at my grandmother's apartment building on the circle drive that connected the three buildings together. My grandmother and her sister's and nieces lived in these buildings, Parker Towers. Three 22 story buildings on a circle drive. In the center of the drive was a patch of grass and in the middle of the grass was a fountain that was lit in color in the evening. We could watch the fountain from the balcony of her building. I can remember how it always felt to drive up to the buildings when we first arrived. How excited we all were and how the doorman would greet us, our car full of family, full of joyful anticipation. There was something wonderful about these doormen, they understood and cared that we were coming to see our grandma and grandpa. It was really quite special. I remember the wait for the elevator, the kinds of buttons we pushed on the inside and outside of the elevators. The ways they were worn in certain ways. The smell of the hallway and the walk on the catwalk high above the city, we had a wonderful view of Manhattan and after the catwalk in through a heavy door and the first door on the left, was grandma's. All of that driving for this moment. And then finally we were in her apartment. The way that tiny apartment held us all and all of those feelings made it a very special place. Grandma's larger dining room table, with a lace table cloth, and plastic over it. Grandpa sitting at the table. We put our bags down and joined him. Grandma served us food and then from that day till the day we left, everyone one of our moments from waking to sleep was guided, watched over, the warmth and the comfort. I was often bored but it was just so nice to be there. Back home, in this way it was to me. Grandma's. Those places, only in our hearts now. And when I try to explain my relationship to New York City to people I always say, its where my grandma lived, so you know when people always think of a home that was their grandma's and it is in the country, for me it was in Queens and in Manhattan, where my uncle's had stores and where we went roaming to sight see or to shop, in the most homey of ways.

Now I look back on those days of my visits at my grandma's
with a heart full of longing. For me too this was a place of blossoming and
belonging, but it is one that is one with boundaries more
fuzzy and ambiguous as the clear transformations my mother

made, as she moved from New York back to Chicago.
There was never one place where I was comfortable. At
grandma's I was not persian enough. I could listen but never
speak. I was
a daughter that was too independent, too willful to be
Persian. I didn't want to marry a persian guy, didn't learn
too cook,
the breaks and splits and fizzes between the
life I was going to live and the one my grandmother
understood were more at the basis of our relationship than
the small amount of common experience we shared. I was so
clearly different, my granddaughter who is different. The
feeling was, "see how we can love one another", although we
are so different. I was always excited to visit my family,
but also nervous, always wishing for their acceptance and
worried about how much I would be left out. My experience at
home was very much the same, we lived in a neighborhood,
amongst assimilated second generation Jewish people
who had decent from Europe. While we were accepted here, as
jewish, we were considered very very different, the dark
ones with the strange language and customs. Entering our
house from the streets in West Rogers Park was like entering
another country.

This story is further complicated by the way that my mother
died. After years of painful struggle, my mother gave her
own life to a bay outside of New York City.

My family had
moved to Los Angeles while I was an undergraduate at the
University and I opted to remain living in the University
town where I had studied. Things were not going well in Los

Angeles for my mother. My parent's life together was very difficult. My mother was a progressive and intelligent woman and I believe she was stuck between worlds, she had the potential to do whatever she wished to do in her life, she was so intelligent. She had poured her intelligence and ability to do an incredible amount of work into bringing her family to some level of comfort in this new world they had entered. As the children left the house and my parents relationship went from bad to worse. I believe she felt how her potential had been trapped under the watch of my traditional family's expectations of the role she was to fulfill. And this compared to what she understood could be possible for her here in the United States, was a lot to comprehend. The constant transition between the two worlds was too hard for her to take. That under the weight of constant translation, she collapsed. Of course, the reasons for these things can never be so surely told. But I always felt that my mom edged out into that bay because the world wouldn't make a space big enough to hold her.

So one day, she took a trip from Los Angeles, to New York, to stay with her cousin who she held in such high regard. And one morning, they woke up to find her missing from the guest cottage she had slept in the night before. A search found her washed up on the shore of a very beautiful bay they had gone to visit a few days before.

My family wondered how she could have managed to walk so far to find this place of rest. The bay was miles from the place she stayed in. And I could not imagine why my mother had made a choice like this. My mother who I watched imagine

every good possibility and every possible solution to any problem. My mother who I had seen time and time again work her way out of difficulty through her application of compassion, intelligence, creativity, strength and pure force simply gave up at this moment. The only way I could honor her, was to respect her decision.

My cousin met me at the airport on the day of her funeral. We had grown so much since we had last seen each other that she held up a sign with my name on it so that I could recognize her but once I did my knowledge of her was instantaneous. I could even imagine the circumstances by which they had decided to make that cardboard sign with my name written on it with marker. And the special gentle way in which she gave me some difficult detail about the funeral, were so recognizable to me, not as the way she did things but in the way that things were done in my Persian family.

That place where my the location of my primary belonging was so tenuous, was my first sense of belonging in this world. That space where I could understand but never could manage to speak.

I was tunneled right back into my sense of this family of my origin, as I walked into the funeral home. Joy washed over my face as I saw the faces of my aunts and cousins, and then I remembered the occasion.

It has been ten years since my mother died. And sometime it feels like it was yesterday. And lost with her is so much of the knowledge of those worlds which I inhabited as a child.

and when I say Mama Bozorg, baba Bozorg, Chaleh, Dayee, Ameh, Amhoo, I have to say to you these are the words for my grandmother, grandfather, aunt and uncle and that in Persian, there are different words to distinguish the maternal aunt from the paternal, the maternal uncle from the paternal. But nothing can explain the moments when I understood who those people were to me, and the confusion I felt as a little girl translating the words aunt and uncle into four different words. Translating those differences in a little girl's mind makes for a vast terrain of relationship and understanding of how things become real in the world.

And I can't explain fully how it means to feel the exact same way over and over again, when I meet a new Persian person and speaking in my strange tongue, I explain in Pharsi, that I understand Phari, but I don't really speak it, as weird as that might seem to them because I am telling them this in Pharsi, and then they compliment me on how nice my accent is.

And even more interesting is the way that they can't understand how to include me into their communication, because I surprise them by understanding everything that they say and respond in English, which most of them can't speak. But the strangest part of this all is that the feeling is not at all new. This is all a part of my first understanding of belonging, an understanding of not belonging.

So this to me explains my compulsion to make art,
still
merging and mixing system,
still expanding out into the
world by remaking rooms
so they hold meanings that let me be
me.

So that I don't have to stay in spaces that can't hold
me,
like they couldn't hold my mother.

Except, that for now,
everything I make can be held in the palm of my hand,
so
that I make a thousand pieces of art,
mixing and making
meaning as need be
and then if I want to move or have to
move,
I'll be able to put them into a suitcase.

My mother never returned to Iran. Never in the thirty years
that she lived in the United States. She arrived in the
United States holding this suitcase, when she was 22, and
died when she was 55.

Triptych: Part Three-The postcolonial beyond

The architecture of this work is rooted in the temporal. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time.

Franz Fanon: Black Skin, White Masks

The truth is that I am completely confused about the way that colonization has affected the ways that I understand myself, and my culture. Upon further reflection I realized that my confusion and sense of ambiguity are hallmarks of the kinds of experience I have had.

That this mixing up, is part of what Orientalism does, the ways that it erases and replaces. It is part of the operating process of assimilation, this forgetting, of who and how we are, and we are over and over reminded of who we citizens should be/are, need to be to function within the harsher and softer lines of the distinction of performative action and presence.

I know that part of my own ambiguity about this is because I am a light skinned woman from a 'non-western' country, and part of it is because I am Jewish, which in the United States is some what identified with the white mainstream majority. It is hard because it is in this way that I confuse myself about who I am and where I stand. And this has always been the confusion. This pain of not really knowing how to explain who it is you are to yourself, what space it is you are coming from when you understand the world.

For me, one part of this is the cultural and internal identification issues, while living at the border. Anzaldua speaks about the internal strife.

The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued with psychic restlessness.



In a constant state of mental nepantlism, an Aztec word meaning torn between ways, *la mestiza* is a product of a transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another. Being trilingual, monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, speaking a patois, and in a state of perpetual transition, the mestiza faces the dilemma of the mixed breed: which collectivity does the daughter of a dark-skinned mother listen to?

(Anzaldua, 1999, p 100).

Add to this, the constant renaming that occurs with orientalism and the whitening that occurred for me because of my light skin and because middle easterners are considered, Caucasians, while still being non-western, and a shadowy picture of my blurred boundaries and borders come into view.

Iran, my nation of ethnic origin, I dare not go back to, because I am Jewish, because I am a Westernized woman, because I am an American. Because U.S. bombs might be pointed here next. The same I feel about Israel, the land I learned to love in Hebrew school, that land that oppresses Palestinians. My people, the “second” class Jews in Israel look more like the Palestinians than the ruling class of Israel. And the story of Israel is far different from the perspective of a Middle Eastern Jew, than any of the narratives in the U.S. can explain. My family story is so rife with complexity, of living in and moving from places and cultures, that have been named and renamed, and do not fit in the lines that western stories tell.

I am a person whose history is from the western canon of occluded history. My family is Jewish from Iran and Iraq, a group that is surprising for most Americans to hear about because everyone is so sure that the middle east is Arab, or that Pharsi is a language of the Muslim world. Seeing



that somehow the inherent Jewishness of Isreal and the inherent Arabness of the rest of the Middle East is the reason why there is fighting in the region. That these two occur in one body is surprising, if not the cause for some peace treaty. For the US academy, I identify myself as Arab American, though Iranians are not Arabic by language or by state, and Iraqis are only Arabic by language. On cards for Equal Opportunity employment status, I am meant to check the Caucasian box.

‘Arabs’ (which I am or am not one of), have experienced an enormous racialization process since September 11, 2001. My features get read as ‘ethnic,’ much more than before. My facial features, while still seeming ambiguous in terms of a race/ethnicity marker to many but not so much, invisible, as before. My lands, the U.S., Iran and Israel are in varying degrees of war and active domination with one another. Not to mention Iraq the land where my grandmother comes from, and the narratives of these conflicts shift depending on where one stands in the world. Even where my grandmother comes is different depending on who you ask, is it some Arab speaking region of Iran near Iraq, or is it Iraq? What I do know is that both my mother and grandmother are buried in the Iraqi-Jewish section of the cemetery on Long Island.

A scholar from Jewish-Iraqi decent once asked me, “What tribe are you from?” I asked my aunt about this, she said ‘You need to talk to Vivian’s mom about this, she knows all of those details.’

When my mom was alive, she put together a family tree, it was on a piece of paper about four foot high and what seemed like infinity wide. In the commotion after her death we misplaced this. Family from Iran, now spread in the United States, Israel, and parts of Europe, not many that we know of left in Iran. My grandmother’s family all left Iraq to avoid persecution of the Jews in date. So many displacements.



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Through these many layers of meanings, cultures, politics and economics and my mother's dowry jewelry falls back into my hands after a 13 year hiatus at my uncles house. This 5 pound pile of gold coins and jewelry that my mother was given when she got married, was a transfer of wealth to her at marriage.

The gold she never sold in the many years of struggle in the United States. Falls into my grad student apartment, no money for conferences life, student loan life and I am all a wonder.

Through this many layers of money systems and taxation and economies, a pile of gold most likely even older than my mother lands in my life, here in the year 2007, here in the United States, gold that can be converted into spendable legal tender in almost any country in the world.

The gold does not need a visa, a passport, a greencard, or stay here undocumented, It didn't travel through the globalized system of money networks. It was given to my mother from her family, some of which was given to them, and she gave it to me. It was her wealth and now it is mine. In this world some things values are constantly shifting, others are more constant.

We have so many stories, each of us in our family, many of the grandmas and grandpas have passed on, but the Aunties, Uncle and cousins each hold different parts of the knowledge. The stories. We have all lived very rich and difficult and complicated lives. We are all proud, and have great reason to be.

But how we are where we are now, this is what this work seeks to understand. How we are where we are now and the psychic pushes and pulls we experience, and how they bring us to the world we are in and make, all of the inversions, reversals and revisions. How these things play

themselves out in our lives, putting all of us on the inside and outside of identity lines whose borders and definitions, meanings and connotations, shadings and shadows are very old, very new, traditional, inventive, resistant or grappling with the machinations of the politics of power.

This I explore, as Anzaldua speaks:

Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland...It is like a cactus needle embedded in the flesh. It worries itself deeper and deeper, and I keep aggravating it by poking at it. It is like a cactus needle embedded in the flesh....I get deep down into the place where it is rooted in my skin and pluck away at it, playing it like a musical instrument-the fingers pressing, making the pain worse before it gets better. Then it comes out. No more discomfort, no more ambivalence.... That's what writing is for me, an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of experience, whatever it might be.

(Anzaldua, 1999, pg 94)

within the larger context of my larger family's movements, displacements, losses and replacements.

The story in this dissertation is about how the memory of my childhood and adult home culture put certain kinds of confusion or pressure on me, on my concept, notion and sense of home.

Home, how we live together is our most intimate places, helps to form our sense of belonging.

Home, most often and easily affected by the vice of colonization. On postcolonialism and home, Bhabha states,

"The recesses of domestic space becomes sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily. the private and public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. (Bhabha, 1994, pg 9).

In this performative way that meaning is made in our live under conditions of colonialism/postcolonialism conducts a kind of unhomeliness (Bhabha, 1994, pg. 11). Because translation happens in the fabric of our everyday lives, this kind of constant shifting of meanings brings into our lives a kind of instability, a way that our homes are never secure. That shifting meanings because of power relations, creates in the details of living, times when what means, no longer means, what is love no longer is love. Where is comfort is no longer comfort.

Living in the borderlands, creates often troubling or devastating events and identity complexities rife with the power relations that are a part of cultural dominance. As Anzaldua states,

Neither hispana India negra espanola
ni gahacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

(Andaldua, 1999, p 216)

While living in this “not comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions” (Anzaldua, 1999, preface), some good comes from it,

There is exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being worked on. I have the sense that certain faculties-not just in me but in every border resident-colored or non-colored-are being activated awakened.....and the alien element has become familiar, not with society’s clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the heard. No, not comfortable but home.

(Anzaldua, 1999, preface)

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This idea has some similarities with the conditions which Homi Bhabha believes lead to living in the spaces of the ‘beyond’ In the sense of time and the practice of culture. Bhabha sees the work of postcolonial artists as being engaged in a space of “invention and intervention” (Bhabha, 1994, pg 7), dwelling in the space of the beyond. Dwelling in the beyond is “to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side.” (Bhabha, 1994, pg 7).

To ‘dwell in the beyond’, to do the borderline work of culture, requires,

“....an encounter with ‘newness’, that is not part of the continuum of the past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent in between space that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.

(Bhabha, 1994, pg 7)

Postcolonial cultural workers, artists, interrupt the continuum between the cultural past and cultural present, by reconfiguring the past in paradigms of meaning, that will open and close portals of possibility and understanding. Discursive fields are expanded and shifted so that one can make new meanings and form new trajectories from this new present. Through uncovering occluded pieces of official histories, through re-imagining notions of margin and center, through adding the multiple voiced stories of events when there only was one, by reworking the symbolic content of events and knowledges through fantasy and imagination, and through so many other possible tactics, postcolonial artists reconfigure the past so that a new present is possible.

Through the many kind of mediums we work in text, sound, movement, visuals, tacit spatial perception, etc, postcolonial artists strategize possibilities for expanding discourses.

Transforming oppression into spaces of hope, of possibility Homi Bhabha says,

“Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the ‘present’.” (Bhabha, 1994, pg 1). He places the understanding of selves and cultures, in space and time,

“It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond....the ‘beyond’ is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past...

...we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. (Bhabha, 1994, pg 1).

These words of Bhabha’s so clearly connect to the work of Gloria Anzaldua in her explanation of border life.

To survive the Borderlands

You must live sin fronteras

Be a crossroads

(Anzaldua, 1999, pg 216)

It is interesting to note that here, that Anzaldua does not say one must live at the crossroads, she says you must ‘be a crossroad.’ We make places possible when we become crossroads, instead of living at them. It is in this place of the ‘beyond’ where one can become the crossroads, it is when one becomes the crossroads, that we can live at the beyond.

Chapter Four: Looking for Home

The Keys, Where are my Keys?

CATEGORIES²

Living in my space like I deserve to

What is this way that I can inhabit myself

Living in the margins

PersianIraqiJewish

IranianAmerican

ArtistIntellectual Writersingerdancer

I remember my love

WorkingClassMiddleClass

I remember who I am

Woman

That is how I survive

Adultchild from a difficult family Survivor

No group no category works

Of family suicide

I live in my body That I know is fully mine That is where the categories stop And

I just am

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THE SINGER

A Singer whose voice is caught in her throat What kind of singer is that?

What kind of singer is that? People ask. The singer that I am.

² An Extended version of this section is published under the title, "Talking about alchemy, the grid, the wing and the crystal ball" in *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, 2003. The publisher allows for the reuse of this text.

That I am. I am.

A little girl I went to school I didn't know the language I learned the language

A little less little I went to my grandma's house I didn't know her language anymore

I was confused I didn't want to learn the language again Which was better? Why

Wasn't my grandma's language good enough For everyone else It was good for me

So I listened but not to language anymore

To sound and the space it made And quietly sweetly softly

Sound has come out of me since then When I listened at my grandma's house

Sound and the people I love and the safety I was in, was all one

So between language, in sound I found a special voice

A voice that knew space knew wisdom A sound that washes over everything

And make it one Knew clearly about me, you and us

And all the me's and us's inside too.

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THE PROBLEM OF MY EPIPHANIC MOMENT

And the problem became how to find my voice, that self again

When I wanted to let her back in, I had gotten so used to doing it

The way others wanted

To take my cues from someone else

I am very empathic A survival skill I discovered

In moments when space was taken from me
That which was mine, of my humanity. No longer trusting the world I knew,
Sensing deeply fear, I searched for protection
And so now its hard to be me all the way
I didn't fit anywhere too many categories I fit everywhere
Rather I acted like that Acting like they act. And they act, and they act
And I fit everywhere. Everywhere but with me

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On the Sunny Bright Quad

On the sunny bright quad at the U of I, a journalism student looks into a camera, she smiles and says, "We are here today to ask the public's opinion about Hollywood's response to the tragedy in New York through its's fundraising efforts." She is blonde and young. She reminds me a lot of the face of the woman I saw on TV, two Tuesdays ago, when the buildings were falling. She was shaking and crying, she had just escaped from the inside of one of the nearby buildings that was affected by the crash. The woman on the TV was blonde and well coifed, like this woman on the quad.

She was about ten years older. I was sitting in my therapist's office watching her on TV, I had gotten up and like any usual morning I was listening to NPR on the Radio and brushing my teeth. I was listening to the voice of the newscaster that I was used to, but I knew right away there was something wrong by the shock and fear in his sound. "Blah, Blah, Blah, Blah, New York...blah, blah, blah, the radio was in the other room. I couldn't hear it.... but something was going on in New York. I stepped into the other room, to hear clearly, that an airplane flew into one of the Twin Towers in New York City.

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I have a keychain

I have a keychain I carry with me. I bought it in the gift shop near the Ed Sullivan Theatre where David Letterman does his show. The keychain is an image of an apple printed onto a small square piece of acrylic. Inside the apple is a representation of the New York City Skyline. There is the Statue of Liberty, The Empire State Building and The Twin Towers. Near the Ed Sullivan Theater is the Brill Building where a lot of the tunes from the Tin Pan Alley Era were written. These were the people who crafted a great deal of the..."The Twin Towers" I thought when I was listening to the radio, that is south, near Wall Street and Battery Park. Lila works in Mid-Town, Near the Empire State Building, she's going to work today, she had no reason to be around there, "Good." I call her cell phone, the circuits are busy. I go back to the radio, another plane has crashed into the other tower. "This is starting to sound bad," I think.

I go back to the radio, another plane has crashed into the other tower. "This is starting to sound bad, "I think. The phone rings, it is my sister, she is panicked. I ask her if she is safe. She says yes. I ask her if she is all right, she says no...I ask her where she is, she is at work, her co-workers are outside at the curb watching. I remember the skyline. How you can see the whole city from a good view on any city block, the closer giant buildings looming over you where you are standing, the further and even taller buildings giving a feeling of space in the distance. "Lila, what are you afraid of?" I ask her. "What is going to happen next?", she says. I laugh, "Don't worry this isn't the beginning of World War III." I try to cheer her up, we promise to talk later. She tells me to call the rest of the family to tell them she is ok. I get off the phone. I am listening to the radio. A plane has just crashed into the Pentagon. "What is going to happen next?", I think.

I had a very busy day planned that day. Pushing a lot of deadlines. But I didn't even know if it was safe to to walk outside. I go to therapy, we squeeze in a bit of my inner work between images on the TV. I hug here when I leave. She is great. I stop by friends house, the front door is open, I peek my head in. One of them looks at me for a minute, nods me in. their faces are ashen. They are glued to each other. Their eyes are glued to the TVset. "Desi, do you know what happened? One says wide-eyed. They can't find the words to speak. They had just woken up and heard the news. "Yeah, I know about it." That look on their face. I was there two hours ago.

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Two Weeks Later

Over 6,000 people are reported dead, buried in the rubble of 220 stories of the World Trade Center, twin towers. A part of New York City has been decimated.

The United States president, via, the media declares war five different ways each day. I listen trying to predict what might or might not happen, wishing it would go away. Carefully finding a stance. Aware that everything that I know about the political situation is reported to me by a news media that I don't trust, so what do I really know?

Looking for signs of de-escalation but the escalation is so fast I can't even keep up with it, one week, two weeks, the details are dizzying. It is an illusion to think I can really know what is going on-there is no one word to this, the whole of this nightmare will not translate into a real picture for me- I get flashes of it now and then. Very intricate actions and plans are being

implemented extremely quickly. The president must be a real genius or these strategies have had to have been in play for a long time. All of this has been going on but hidden from the public view, their 'emergency actions' are extension of already working schemes. There are no public discussions of policy. The people who are the have been given no time to grieve, not one official day off. They are declaring war, calling up reserve units, I am watching the flags and military uniforms appear in the neighborhood. The deluge of news is impossible to keep up with plastic and duct tape for windows, germ warfare scares, people in clusters around the world waiting and ready to hare...the destructive might of the US military poised to strike, the history of the relations in the middle east...are you telling me we didn't know about any of this before...when the news of Sheila Chandra and Monica Lewinsky were the top stories...why are we only hearing about it now...we keep going to work..the American People are encouraged to maintain their regular way of life and spend...their money..there are no clear answers coming from anywhere except from financiers, they make guesses about what will happen with the economy, and they tell people how to act to support their county, spend their money. They say stocks in pharmaceutical companies will go up but not to b buy in the defense sector because the prices have spiked. And the voice on the radio from the finance show tell us that the US will show the enemies that are strong because are so much richer than we were when pearl harbor was bombed and look at how we could beat them them...almost destroyed the whole nation of Japan with our might and our riches. It is only within this connection between military might and our riches. It is only within this connection between military might and finance, where any story about government policy has integrity, damn them.

Most People are tired, so tired, right no, not a moment to think to grieve and we thrown into a War, on that could

conceivably finish us all off for good

It's the 'new war' that frenzies us the mean trick is that that war was already going on. We are told to spend and patriotism is confused with grief.

Grief lets us feel the human that is like all the other humans. Patriotism does not. In the meantime a piece of the most pluralistic part of the Unites States has been ruined. I believe that some parts of the American dream is and has been possible. I know that from my own history. The history of New York City is about the plurality the multitudes making the world. I know it form the streets. The knowledge is in my blood, from my family that made their world there.

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The City is wounded and that hurts me.

amidst the frenzy, the speeded up time of a pumped up political-infomania, there is the strange slowness of the lives of the people whose family members and loved ones died in the September 11th tragedy. The image of human flesh torn to pieces by an explosion of that magnitude is difficult to hold in one's imagination for even a second. For some this is a reality that must somehow be understood, as having been experienced by people they loved. Death is inevitable, the wish for peaceful death, as entry seems only fair. Fair to be sent off in a beautiful way from the human collective. I know the slowness from missing, shatter meaning too well.....the missing and shattered place where smell, touch and the space where our loved one occupies is no longer.

This story should not be one that is mixed in with the rest of them.

This one must stand apart.....

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Twilight Moment

This twilight moment is an in-between moment. It's the moment of dusk.

It's the moment of ambivalence and ambiguity. The in-clarity, the enigma, the

Ambivalences, in what happened in the L.A. uprisings are precisely what we

Want to get hold of. It's exactly the moment when the L.A. uprisings could

Be something else than it way seem to be, or maybe something other than

It was seen to be. I think when we look at it in twilight

We learn

To...we learn three things:...one, we learn that the hard outlines of what we see

In daylight that make it easy for us to order daylight disappear. So we begin to

See its boundaries in a much more faded way

That fuzziness of twilight allows us to see the intersections

Of the even with a number of other things that daylight

Obscures for us, to use a paradox. We have to interpret more

In twilight, we have to make ourselves part of the act, we have to interpret,

We have to project more. But also the thing itself in twilight

Challenges us to be aware of how we are projecting onto the even

Itself. We are part of producing the event.

Whereas, to use the daylight metaphor, there we somehow think the event and

Its clarity....as it is presented to us, and we have to just react to it.

Not that we're participating in its clarity: (Bhaba, H. in Deavere Smith, 1994, pp232-234)

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CATEGORIES II

Who is America? Is George Bush America? Or Am I America?

And how are the people who died in the World Trade Center, the visiting Japanese
Chilean, Thai, and India workers. How the hell are they Americans?

Who is Osama bin Laden? Who are the Taliban?

What is the American Way of Life? What is Freedom? What is a war on terror?

A War on Terror?

Who are the Arabs? Am I the Jews? Am I America?

And what is the Flag?

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Transgress.

You can't be pretty unless you are rich And have somebody take care of you.

You can't be a singer unless you act stupid and act sexually.

You can't sing cause your projects made you not a lady and that killed

Your mom.

You not being a lady killed your mom.

You were too smart and independent, you wanted to do things your own way, so
you didn't help her enough, so she killed herself. Yo8u aren't rich, so you aren't pretty

And you can't sing

Keys, where are my keys? I am always afraid I have lost my keys

To get into my house. I am afraid because

Now this is the only true house I have, since my mom died.

My keys, I am standing at the doorway to my house frantically looking for the
Keys and they are right in my hand. I stand this way for eight years. Eight years.

Now I see them.

Can I use them or are you not feminine if you use your own keys to unlock your

Door?

Do I need to get help from a man? Or the approval of a community? Or the love

Of the whole world?

Keys I look up at the poster of a piano keyboard on my wall. Keys?????!!!!!!

For this, change happens in space first, then in texts, my own stories. I always
Have the texts first, but the truth, for me, is that the change doesn't happen till it is in my
presence, my gesture. Wven if I say what I want tos ay, it can't Happen

until I have felt it.

In this life.

My singing need to be found in space, but how? I almost had it before the buildings exploded.

No more, no more shifting ground. I don't care how different I am.

I needed to believe my mother's suicide was my fault, I needed to do that to bring sense to
senseless tragedy.

The absurdity of the deaths at the World Trade Center, I know no that there
Are things just as senseless. Angry, I reach for my right to myself. I have my own

Solid ground.

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Some people wage war Others do not Why do the peaceful ones
Have to put up with the rages of war?

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I heard a story the other day on the radio. In an “Arab” neighborhood in Chicago
A crowd of people gather to chant US USA USA
To the Arabs that live there They tell the Arabs to go home, home, home
....they wave the flag. So sometimes they are outside a Mosque and when the Mosque lets out
there are a lot of people on the streets. Some of these people stick around and chant back. The
chant US, USA, USA. What happened here is that there was one of the ‘anti-Arab’ chanters
was holding one end of a huge US flag and changing and somehow the other end of the flag got
handed to one of the Arab people living in the neighborhood and they were both standing there
chanting, “US, USA, USA”

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I don’t want to tell a difficult story about a difficult thing. I don’t want it to be heavy with blame
at all. I want it to be a light story about a difficult thing. A story about how growth can come
easy if you feed the seeds. I want it to be a good story about a heavy thing that turns light
because of the way it is told.

These days I feel kindness around me every where, people are kind and they make space for each
other...The is about how to make positive things happen...heavy thing...make the story
light...see what happens...big lessons and some times all it takes is to remember.

I love Walt Whitman....From Song of Myself.....

I celebrate myself and sing myself....

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes, the shelves are crowded with perfumes...

I breathe...the fragrance myself and know it and like it

All truths wait in all things...The Insignificant is as big to me as any. (What is more or less than a touch?)....I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and lamps...

And a summit and flower there is the feeling of love they have for each other,

And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson until it becomes omnific

And until one and all shall delight us, and we them...

I believe a leaf of grass is not less than the journey of the stars...

Listener up there! What to you have to confide in me? Look me in the face...

Do I contradict myself I am large I contain

Multitudes...

Missing me one place search another....I stop somewhere waiting for you

(Whitman, 1942, pp 25-110).

Put some joy on the problem, lightly tickle it and know you can direct the energy. I know that if I want to change big things, hard things, I need to make the energy as small as I can then make and even smaller change in the way I am doing things. My heaviness makes the problem so much worse. It reminds me of this stupid war thing...

There are a lot of us living on earth...a lot of us humans, and it's complicated being a person, it really is hard to be a person and interface with some of the ways things are set up right now. I don't know why it is so messed up.

It can get really confusing for me and then when I remember that to take the kind of space I want to take, all I have to do is take it, none of it matters anymore.

It doesn't matter who say what about me or who is more privledged than me. I just take the space, Your experience cannot be taken from you, if you know, if you remember.

There are a lot of things I am angry about believe me...right now I just want to be patient with the world patient. Patient.

Maybe its' because I know about singing and praying and I know that singing can fill the holes up in you right away, Sound/Energy/Force. About force, here we4 all are, living our lives and this September 11 day comes along and a horrible thing happens near us, it is horrible, and it isn't a natural disaster, where we can just say fate...blah, blah, blah, nature, you know, survival of the fittest...whatever. It's a human thing, about an escalated confusion, that all of us have experienced in ourselves. I think it shattered our hearts, seeing what we can do to one another. I think it made us scared and angry and confused about ourselves. And people have all of these weird responses.

Some people respond in kind. Well, I can be a bigger hater than you, watch this. I'm thinking this is a very confused response. Suddenly force is on the center stage. I'm not a big fan of force. Get out of the way and people fall from their own force towards you.

I am a peaceful person. I strongly dislike the way the U.S. has handled itself and I'll tell you I sure will be feeling better when I know there aren't people trying to blow up or gas or hurt the people I love, the place I live, but I don't want to respond with the same foprce that they have. I don't want to copy that energy. I want to stay calm. I want to love the differences, I see, the world I see, quiet down and love it.

I wish I would never give away another minute of my life.

Close your eyes, blow on the system, massage it a bit and redirect the energy.

It may not work but changing myself, turning myself into someone else because of them...I don't want to. I want to choose a dominant story.

My uncle is great. He is a notably kind man. He hasn't had an easy life. We worry about him.

But when we are around him and he disarms us with a comment so full of heart it almost knocks you off your feet, we know he has a deep reserve of something very precious.

That's the kind of world I want to live in. a kind of world full of care and tender gesture.

Light story. Heavy thing. Has it changed yet?

I'll tell you what I am seeing-A lot of people are believing in war and they are all ready to go-more senseless destruction-A lot of messed up identity excuses, a lot of big noise. And then there is the *listening, the care, the concern, the questioning, the mobilization to empower to understand, the instinct to heal that keeps me*

Good

I focus on that and peace

I don't want to hear the words war, America, or terrorist, anymore

After all we breathe the life into these things by believing in them

Peace.

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Immediately after the attack on the World Trade Center, the way I heard sound changed. That first day I don't think I noticed any sounds. That night the sounds started to feel affected, I was sitting outside with a friend and some kind of siren went off , an ambulance or police care. Both of our ears perked up, we looked at each other. "See," I said. "Yeah, I know," he said. That night the sounds were the same but they had a different meaning. I always stop to say a prayer

whenever I hear any siren but suddenly those sounds meant a whole different thing to us, they sounded much more ominous, made of some larger unknown, comprehension wasn't as easy as it had been. Our world was changing. The familiar was not longer.

The next day it got a little weirder. It was so strangely quiet in the neighborhood, no birds.

People were still, not saying much. I was walking around a corner near my house and there was some strange buzz, something I had never heard before, multi-layered with a lot of harmonics. I was startled, "what the hell is that?". I got closer. It was a riding lawnmower. That night at work, an alarm went off. My boss and I looked at each other, very concerned. I very seriously told him I would look into it. I mustered my courage, went to the neighboring department. It was the weather emergency alarm...alarm...alarming...alarm...there was hail in Indiana and it might be coming our way.

My sister's voice on the phone has never been sweeter. I haven't heard the sound of my hand knocking on wood more-laughter sounded so much more hearty and needed. The sound of the voices of the people who bother me were softened, the sound of those I care for became richer.

A week later I went to a concert. I really didn't feel like going but it was a concert in honor of a well-loved composer, who had died a few years back. I knew the concert would be good. I knew his wife and I wanted to be there.

First half, the music was good but nothing touched me. Great compositions, skillful musicians, nothing moved. The audience was worn out, sad, me too.

Second half of the concert, the premiere piece, the Cuban born composer/conductor had spent 24 hours trying to get to Illinois from Florida. He was a US citizen and the officials at the airport asked him for his passport. There was a row of wineglasses filled with water, that were played with the tips of fingers, a string quartet and double bass. Suspended sound. The piece was slow

and so beautiful and long. Long sounds with slight modulations barely noticeable that would build and turn into something new. Moment by moment the layers of hurt and numbness peeled off, there was joy again. Ears anxious to hear the next note, bathing in the comfort of sound. Relief, we were all unbound. The piece was over. The audience clapped, slow, and bodies heated from the sound of it, we were warm. We glowed. The applause was just like the sound of the music suspended, soft.

The second piece, “Calm Like a Bomb, “ began. A violin ran into an amp that modified the sound. Whatever the violin played was turned into a sound that had the stoke of the violin bow and faded out then into a loud roaring sound, unmistakably fighter planes. Shrill whistles, long reliefs, bitg booms. There was Dorothy throwing her whole body into the sound. She leaned forward sn bowed and bowed and bowed hard, quickly, repeatedly, and the sound came back into us. This terrific sound and Dorothy at her violin. Only Dorothy, always elegant, understated, smart and sassy, making this sound. I watched I listened and she played so hard.

I was afraid and clam, calm like a bomb, she took that sound back.

On the way home a lot of the tension I had carried with me on the previous days was gone.

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In the practice room.....Newly liberated I sit at the piano Keyboard. What do I bring that is new? Changed? Change Change I play the Keys Stop, wait Patiently Where is the Energy? Quietly, I direct it. The Categories fall away It is only Sound. I listen How do I want to hear? The notes inside me. I hear them on me Through me Notes pour out! What am I looking for? Make the energy small I can hold it all The multitudes, Through acceptance They belong to me. I don't belong to them. I shift through the splits Moving No more fighting between the pathways One onto the next

Sound as gentle gesture

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Our lives, each one of us, has a right to a good life. I wake up every night at the three am wondering if anything bad has happened. I listen to the BBC correspondent from Afghanistan recommend that the US ask the United Nations to do an inquiry into the terrorist attack and send aid to Afghanistan. I hear cricket scores and the reading of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' in parts. I go back to sleep-.

I want to know how to turn this situation into a marker of when the worlds got good with themselves.

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The scent of autumn breeze. The sun's warmth brings us home. The sky's blue imagines us endless possibility. The light play's stories onto our eyes. Hearts swell at the vision of loved ones, blood boils at threat. Arms reach out in acceptance, away in fear, around each other in comfort. Eyes flash in anger. Sparkle in affection. Smile in joy. Bodies move together and apart. Arms, legs, heads tilt to one side or another to charm or repel. All blessed animals are we. Questions, answers, conflicts, more answers, more questions. We bask in the light are drawn back into the shadows. The sun shines brightly onto the moon lighting the night, the earth casts its shadows. The sun shines brightly onto the moon lighting the night, the earth casts its shadows. How does it all mean? We look to and against each other for reasons. Love.

Gesture: (Movement Piece)

Piece consists of subtle movement of arms, facial expression and feeling,
Performer stands with both feet flat on the ground. There can be a small amount
Of weight shifting during the performance. Arms at side, open eyes.
Starting with arms at side, perform a small amount of arm movement, including
Shifting of eye expression and tilt head,
Performing welcome, honesty, flying, gratitude, pride, gifting, asking etc.
Movement should not be done as static postures
But as fluidly and continuously as possible to follow shifting states in being.

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The Answer:

The sound I can make	Is sometimes lost to me	Sometimes found
And when it is found	It is the greatest mystery	With and an answer so simple
It's not even an answer	It's a shape	And a presence and a
Belief	It's about being	Insideoutside
All one	My core.	

Ubiquitous One: Belonging

What is always there is defined by what is always not

For some people belonging is ubiquitous, like the air we breathe, unnoticed until a situation is presented where air or breath or a lack of it is noticed. For me, a sense of belonging is somehow always understood, defined, by a lack of the sense of the opposite, defined by the lack of a quality of not belonging. A surprise, when that feeling happens, my eyes sparkle, my heart warms. This feeling does not come often to me for a series of reasons, a biculturality forged in colonialisms, estrangement from my family of origin, the decision to be an artist/intellectual, being queer, being from a poor/working class background, and finding myself increasingly around people with more ‘monied’, ‘comfortable’ backgrounds. People with ‘means’.

The cultural implications of being raised as a child in the United States with parents from Iran, certainly plays a role in this. In beginning to put the closing touches on this work. I sensed something missing, there is something left to say, something intangible missing. As I struggled to put words to it, images of certain objects that I keep in my home, come to mind. These objects that often while writing, come into my line of vision, and I take note and say to myself, “you should write about this...these objects....these objects...” These things that were in my family of origin’s house, or that my mother later gave to me, are placed all around me, are Persian objects. They are mostly small objects, a candy dish, a pair of woven baby slippers, a small decorative savarvar, a book of illustrated poetry by Hafez, the Persian grammar books that sat on our family

bookshelves ever since I remember, a piece of printed cloth that my mother gave me to cover the surface of a table.

These objects are place in strange spots in my apartment, they are not fancy, they are special and sweet. And I don't seem to notice them, until I do. Some of them have been with me for a long time. I would miss them if they were gone, in a way they are ubiquitous to me, in my space, in my life.

When I was a girl and a young woman, I was surrounded by interesting, strong women in my family and they were so beautiful to me, with their large dark eyes and strong boned faces. Their English spoken with strong accents, that would foray into pharsi for a more intimate or comfortable conversation. The English seemed put on, something they tried at, when they spoke pharsi, the rhythm and comfort changed. It seemed they would disrobe from their English selves into their Persian ones. To me, it seemed they would return. Return, when they spoke Pharsi.

These are women who are supremely sophisticated, weather they shopped at K-Mart, garage sales, or Rodeo Drive. They had been tried and they won. Succeeded in moving form one culture. to another, my mother, grandmother, aunts and cousins. They were and are interested, interesting, strong, smart and their meanings are nuanced with many layers. They are not necessarily 'well educated' or wealthy but they are cultured. They are cultured because they have to be, to work things out. While I live without them near me , their way of being is ubiquitous in the everyday ways that I approach the cells around me, as I breathe, belonging. Belonging is not ubiquitous, but being a part of the way they were is.

In the corner on the second shelf of the corner bookshelf is a smile pile of ‘Persian books’, included in this pile is M Satrapi’s, “Persepolis,” a graphic novel rendering of Satrapi’s leaving Iran as a teenager during the Islamic Revolution, there are also two fifty year old persian grammars that were a part of my parents book collection, there are a few books in farsi. (I don’t know what they say but my friend Jake who learned Farsi in the US Navy, once told me what the titles of these books meant, they belonged to my mother), there is a contemporary magical realism novel called, “Moonlight on the Avenue of Faith,” on the tope of this pile of books is a pair of children’s house slippers, the tops hand woven in red fine thread, with thin wooden bottoms and tassles. The shoes are shorter than the length of my hands. They have never been used and I have no idea how old they are. They are from Iran. These kinds of patterns have a way of speaking to me about who I am.

I think I picked up these baby slippers from my mother’s things after she died. Along with my mother’s cooking pots, her big (deigs), that she used for making large family sized portions of delicious aromatic rice, (rice with orange peels and raisins, rice with lima beans and dill), for the large family parties she would throw.

My mom was married to the oldest son of the family. She would throw large Persian parties for my dad’s family, she would cook for days and never really enjoy the parties. She felt obligated to do this because my father was the oldest. I know and recite this to myself as if it were the lines on the palms of my hand.

These baby slippers and other things like the big deigs and small glasses, estekan, for tea, small silver spoons, clink, clink, clinking on the sides of the small glasses of tea sitting on small glass

saucers, tea glasses too hot for my child hands to hold, clink, clink at family gatherings large and small, small glasses in large man's hands, as we all sat in the circle listening to one another speak. How many times have I heard the clink, clink of these glasses, and they were never ubiquitous for me, they were something, as a part of a situation, that always carried wonder for me, a stop.

There were an extraordinary part of ordinary daily life in my common but not often, family get togethers. This was part of home to me, always different and other than the life I was used to. Home, our family get-togethers, was a different place to me, always observing my own difference from theirs.

Clink, clink as you drop one or two cubes of sugar into your tea, fancy silver tea glass holders for special occasions, into always earl grey tea, prepared by putting one pot of water on top of the other on the stove. My mother teaching me to do this in the same way she taught me to make Persian rice, always fluffier, each grain separate as she showed me with her fingers, our special rice, our different tea, the presence and preparation of these two constant and everyday staples in our home markers of difference from outsiders, outsiders, which kind of included me.

I was taught these things, as a special way, so that I could know who 'we' really were. So when time came around I could perform 'we' if I wanted to. So that the special skills, of what made us who we were, would not be lost to me in my own daily life, in those small, quiet and specially ordered places where the repetitions of these crafts added a knowledge of how we functioned in the everyday, to how I would become myself in the everyday. What could be available to myself, as I became in the everyday, as my mother's daughter, the Persian American girl named Nazee at

home, Desire in the daytime outside. Who was taught at an early age, how to take the tea on a tray to my aunts and uncles, cousins and friends talking in a circle at my maman bozorg, grandmothers house, the two the bifurcation, Nazee, Desiree, Maman bozorg, grandmother, always present.

The tea, the rice, always present, never ubiquitous, the bifurcation, always present, so completely ubiquitous. That writing this, the ah-ha is enourmous. That special feeling when you notice the ubiquitous.

Seeking is a daily experience, when what you experience regularly, daily, as habit, is not ubiquitous, and then what is ordinary, is not ubiquitous, and then is absent. It is as if there is something of my own essence in the sweet warm spell of Earl Grey prepared Persian style. I picked up the baby slippers from my mom's things after she died. My mother too would keep these kind of objects, in strange places. In our fancy living room we had Persian rugs on the floor and engraved silver. In our modest home, these objects screamed a strange splendor, but Persian baby slippers placed carefully in a drawer makes a tender sense.

I have in my topsy turvey artist studio home a wooden chest of drawers. In these drawers I keep some of my finer clothes. I also keep some of my older favorite clothes. Hand painted silk, finely knit cotton, well-designed, hand painted, hand sewn, the things I want to preserve are in these drawers. They have a special kind of order, these thing are marked as being where the fine things are, specially kept aside, rarely disturbed, special, habitual, and also ubiquitous. In these drawers, I also have some strange objects, keepsakes, a small empty silver frame I found in my mother's things, some lace doilies, she made. I another of these clothing drawers I keep my important

documents, passport and social security card In these drawers, with my finery, are the things I don't want to loose, and the things I don't want to forget. My mother did a similar thing, always putting things in strange places. She would hide chocolate cookies in the china cabinet. In my mothers life, every closet or drawer would have a set apart hidden section. The back corner of the closet, on the outside side of the organizer that held our cutlery in the kitchen drawer, on the front of the top shelf of the cabinet under the sink, behind the towels in the bureau in the bathroom, on the top of the china cabinet, and she would put small keepsakes in the drawers with her finer clothes. When I found these baby slippers, I imagined that they sat in the drawers with her scented finery.

Small objects, for use, but never been used as intended, objects where the curve of the line reminds of you something, in strange out of the way places. Out of the way places, but places where the focus is constant,

Those places you rarely visit, the china cabinet, the drawer of finer clothes. Spaces that are rarely used, but well intended, the medicine cabinet, the place where the light bulbs are kept, the place where I keep extra pens and paper. Baby slippers, things that are meant for one thing but holds the meaning for another, placed in these out of the way, rarely visited well-intended spaces, somewhat hidden and very ubiquitous places.

My mother, when she was living in Santa Monica, ripped apart a small pillowcase with a that had a traditional Persian print on it and turned it into two pieces of cloth. It was a nothing so special pillowcase, but cute. She put it into an envelope and mailed to me, twenty years ago. I





have this cloth covering the surface of a wooden crate that holds some of my writings. I look at its sometimes and wonder to myself. Why did she send this to you? Why did you keep it?

(Ubiquitous Two)-Notes

While working on this document, this creative work, this document for exit from a phd program, this document which carries so many of my dreams and my heart, because the work is for a time and place that has meant so much to me.

While writing this document, in the back of my head, I have had this idea or rather this nagging voice in my head, or this reminder, this reminder to write ‘The Persian Piece’.

The notes for ‘The Persian Piece,’ are scattered all over the text of this dissertation, in a form that looks like this,

(note: iranican, race, puar, queer)

(note: grandma’s apartment in queens, inside outside)

(note: world trade center, finger’s pointing, Uncle David at tower when first built, Lila, showing me piece of the sky with her, that was left there, post 911, the sky that you couldn’t see before),

(note: land of sand and fog, Iranian masculinity, stereotyping, how could kingsley make such a movie)

(note: Iranian woven baby shoes first in mom’s drawer then in mine.)

(note: persian language: can’t speak but understand, never fully in that world, little girl listening to grown ups entering that world by understanding but never being able to articulate myself there, pattern that stayed with me)

(note: first very serious misogynistic racial slur on Fitz TV show, smells as bad as a persian cooz in here, cooz I believe a slur on the vagina, on television, makes my stomach crawl) (note: first real incident of obvious racial profiling, I believe I’ve experienced, at the bank last month,

the bank manager, who I complained about before for treating a Hispanic woman poorly, using her name, over and over again, while scolding her for reasons I thought unfounded, saying to me, what an interesting name, where is that from, with a tone, I found hard to believe, I lied and said it was a Turkish name, in this guys head, better to be Turkish, I thought than Iranian, than Iraqi, than perhaps even Jewish to this fellow, I thought, no telling where the prejudice is coming from here, no way anyone can ask that question in a friendly way).

(note: department head at a research one institute as a joke puts a large foam rubber “king tut” party hat on the department’s graduate directors head. He doesn’t really stop to think that this might be ethnically offensive)

(note: talking to the most likely, guys from Pakistan on the bus corner, one of the guys was chewing on some kind of thing that looked like a stick, I knew it was good for teeth and mouth, I watched him, till he got angry at me, then asked him about it, I had been looking for something like this for a long time, and then the three of them talked to me about it, anti-bacterial, anti-microbial, can get it at middle eastern stores. I wanted to say. I am not on the outside. I am from there too, but I am not)

Notes like this littered all over my floor. All over my computer. For a piece, I can’t bring myself to articulate.

A way that this troubling, yet wonderful, identification, I lived with as a child, causing much confusion, some alienation, but always a sources of pride and wonder, because, yes, for me, being with my persian family, being a part of this group, living part time in this world, was wonderful, it was rich and brought so much to my life, my experience of everything good and many things hard, my sense of what it was to be a young girl, then a woman, informed by the

persian dancing, raxk iruni. I did with my family at weddings, those beautiful women, with the smoky colors on their eyelids, those were my mother. That beautiful woman with the heavy dark eyes and thick rich lips, my grandmother, yes, my grandmother's house smells delicious from food in a way most people can only wonder and wish about, yes, I know how to communicate with my grandmother, who spoke only a nominal English, farsi most of the time, and Arabic in special occasions, since I was a little girl I would track, when and how and who she was, as she shifted from language to language and I was her little grand daughter who would go to visit her in New York City, sleep on her floor which was layered with large persian rugs cause they had so many, that they had to put on the floor in layers.

I knew about how you had to turn rugs, how you had to care for rugs because we had a few at home. I was the one that grandma would just laugh for joy around. She brought out huge piles of bedding from the hall closet of her small one bedroom apartment for our family to sleep on, on the rugs in the living room floor, six of us...our nuclear family, and my uncle, sometimes the door to the balcon (balcony) open to let in the sweet air from 21 stories, high up in the new york city skyline, where the city dirt and grime cannot reach.

My knowledge of persian culture is intimate. I know as first and second nature, who we are and how we are different and how we had to struggle to keep ourselves and give ourselves away. I am naïve about the culture, I grew up in it and lost it in someways, as an adult but always it is a part of me. That world has my loyalty. And now, she and I, I and she have become public. It was a privledge and a burden to have our group fall into invisibility, ethnically, racially?, when I was growing up. There was very little outside of us, to point to, to reflect back me to myself, it was something like my name, that I was always spelling out to people. My mother did a wonderful

job, turning our life knowledge into “culture” and inviting people over or giving presentations at school, on our culture.

(note: media-outside stereotyping, post 911, more ‘arab’ villains in television shows, the photos next to the twin towers of the ‘arab men’ with beards presented as the towers fall over and over again, the towers fall into a panic, the falling is cultivated into a panic, the panic is connected to fear of bodies, bodies that are the ones in those photo, bodies that look like the ones in those photos, people that look like those bodies, look like my friends and family and like me...but not so much the women, I take note, on the tv show 24 a full season to family, Family, FAMILY, of middle eastern terrorist, father terrorist, a generic middle eastern family, who I believe is supposed to be Turkish, but whose house in Southern California, looks much like the persian houses I have been in, Persian/Iranian?, why do I use persian, not Iranian, because my mother did, why am I complaining? No one has come after me. Not yet, anyways, never mind that the security guard at the airport freaks when I tell him my family is Iranian. Am I Iranian? Am I transnational, I’ve only lived in the states, in France for a short time in college, like an American kid would. I watch profiled at the bank for the first time. Hearing the slur, persian cooz, dirty dirty on the persian woman’s vagina on television. I know my project puts me on some list somewhere, though I have a US passport and I can talk American, not even, academic American, regular working class American with the rest of them. And always, I am Jewish and in a bigger and smaller way than I understand, and I wonder why do I have to have these divisions. Why is it always an either or, or a division I have to navigate and I know it is because of the politics, identity politics, race politics, religious politics and representations which make divides in lives like mine, that otherwise have no divides. To explain to a European Jew that we/ I am a different

kind of Jew, not part of the tribe, but part of the tribe because of race/ethnicity, and have them belittle my explanation (shohat..the books, stolen, the power, Mizrahi), and then watch a roomful of them make a stereotype that insults a Iraqi Jewish scholar, at a Jewish Studies Workshop, because they don't know the difference. The European Jews on a whole make a point of cherishing we the oddity, they visit and send money to the Jews in Cuba. In my assimilated middle class Jewish neighborhood, there were always the dark ones, the different ones, the ones with no money, our family, and the large group of Russian immigrants, they didn't speak English well, they lived in apartments. By talking about this I mean to make no anti-semitic remark, is it possible though to say this without seeming anti-semitic, these people, some of them, are still my very good friends. Can I say this without seeming anti-semitic. I was relieved, when people who were of other ethnicities moved into the neighborhood, the Korean family down the block, the family from Cuba around the corner, at last some relief, from being the only ones that were different.

The politics which make divisions where there are none but naming in a way that retains hegemonic power. Jewish as white, happened recently in the US, and we were non-whites. Persians/Iranians were a relatively invisible minority, until the US needed to/chose to racialize bodies for a simple reason to go to war. I explain to my father, that I do 'Arab' American studies, though we are not Arab, I say it over and over again. We don't speak the Arabic language and we are not from the countries considered Arabic in the middle east, but here now, we are Arabs. I think of my grandma who spoke Arabic, I think it is ok to say I am doing a work on being Arab-American. The division are not on the inside of me....all of this situated flows into my identity

space, my experience, Are we indigenous, I wonder, some people say, the Iraqi Jews are indigenous, I check on the internet.....

Fine when it is all in me....transnational? postcolonial? A girl whose mom took her to school and made sure her daughter was not overlooked for the better, higher level classes at the better Chicago public schools, she was attending, and it all would have been fine if I had left it at that and stayed only Jewish.

But now the cache has been broken. The images in the media and the layer of prejudice it conducts slathers a sameness over all of us, and I mean all of us. Not just us, who would be called arabs, but those who are not as well, those who are considered “white” (am I white, my skin is light, I have been considered white by many), those who are called Hispanic. Generalities? Stereotypes, US culture is built on them, created to other and use, cover for politic. When people say someone does identity politics, and uses this as a negative, they are completely inaccurate, identity is politics, and those of us who study this are not making something up, we are talking about something very real.

(note: media stereotyping ‘arabs’, media racializing ‘arabs’) and to watch this happen, to feel this happen, to have brawny young college students seem kind of afraid of me at dusk waiting for a light, right after 911, is intense and it rubs up against my memory of the private way my family was persian, in a difficult and different way. I say to my sister, now, there are Arabic looking grandmas at the mall and they look at me and recognize that I look like someone who is like them. My sister understands, I am happy. This identification, all identity politics, is changing us

all, now, daily. I go to the Iranian student's association meeting, I can't speak to anyone there, I don't speak Farsi, I feel awkward speaking to the people there in English. I watch a webcast of a political debate, one of the debates, before the green revolution. I can't follow the farsi, its too fast and grown-up, not anything like the language we spoke at home. I go to a vigil on campus, in support of the people being hurt in the summer protests. I feel like an outsider, until someone I know from parties recognizes me. I start to meet people there, there is an uneasiness, in the socializing, for everyone, until we know who each other is, we don't, suspicions and strong political divides.

(note: Iranian produced media, internet communities, persepolis, music, etc..huge, iranican race, maz jabrani, etc)

(note: persian woven baby shoes, in mom's drawer, in my drawer.) (note: persian engraved silver, rugs, coins) (note: green revolution, internet) (note: Iranian filmmakers, creativity)

(note:Googosh, mom, googish's haircut in the 70's, and mom's, self-fashioning) (note: the green revolution, Joan Baez singing in farsi, other rock stars, twitter, the internet)

It is the summer of the Green Revolution, I am taking a walk in my neighborhood. I run into a wonderful professor from another department, he asks me how my dissertation is going, I say, I just talked to someone, who did some of the international computer work, keeping communications open for the protestors in Iran, I say I want to write about this. He says no! Just make that an epilogue. I think how can I?

The notes, they are everywhere, I notice the decorative pieces persian pieces that my mother sent to me before she died. They are enameled metal, with persian designs on them. They are shaped like the fancier pieces made of silver that I inherited after she died. These pieces were the ones we could play with, the others were for show, except for the mini silver samarvar set, that we all

wanted when we were splitting the things up. For some reason that was ok to play with. These pieces, they sit in my cluttered apartment and once in a while my eyes settle on them. The piece of cloth with a printed persian design on it, colors, curves and curls, something that was maybe a pillowcase or a bag that she opened into a cloth, because for us, for a while this pieces of culture were so hard to find.

(note: Funny in farsi, reading Lolita in Teheran, male Iranian scholar comes to campus, claims these writers are self-orientalizing, makes the comparison to 'house negroes'.)

Jump the scholarly bandwagon, topic in vogue, orientalism, self-orientalism. Have I done this? Have I jumped the bandwagon?

Do I self orientalize?

I give up.

I say I self orientalize, of course I do, but that does not mean I don't belong.

How could you be of the 'orient' and live in the US and not self-orientalize? Complicated, but I certainly don't like some middle easterners saying that others 'self-orientalize'.

Who claims authenticity and who claims the right to say this?

There is already enough.

The notes they are everywhere. Notes I have written. Notes, others have written.

(note; Iranians opting for model minority status)

MIT group of scholars, create organization, say Iranians are the most successful minority in the US today.

Sister interviewed for Iranian radio, first jewish Iranian American woman to win emmy award.

Website: Iranian jazz fusion band in Amsterdamn, youtube, Iranian parcours, Iranian heavy metal band.

News-US worried about iran nuclear buildup.

Belonging.

Self-Orientalism.

Identity Politics.

Racism.

Fear.

War.

My childhood, my grandma's house, the inside and outside balconys.

Here

Lila and uncle davids fingers wtc

The shoes in the drawer...

The notes they are everywhere.....

Iranican-

Beverly Hills Iranian Americans-W magazine

The Shahs of Sunset

The silver in the storage...

Simple really who one chooses to be, how one chooses to love....intro...love contested...control love....control a lot...

Obama-McCain..I'm afraid, Obama is an Arab, No, he's not an Arab he's a good person, like us.
On job applications, I check the box. On the minority card....white, includes middle-eastern. I
cross this line out, I check Asian.

Note: The remarkable creativity and prolificness of transnational Iranians as producers of
culture, Sister's film project, America 1979^{viii}









The Deck of Cards

When I was a little girl we live very close to Foster Beach in Chicago. We went there so often that it seemed like our backyard. I remember being very joyful and playing there. I remember picking many many yellow flowers from the lawn and giving them to my mother.

When I was a little older we moved and then we lived close to Loyola Beach. Again, here is where we spent most of our free hours in good weather. We would take family with us when they came from Iran.

One day we met at the beach with a big group of family, many of them were from out of town. We picnicked on the grass of this long expanse of public beach. I remember wondering where my father and most of the men of our group had disappeared to, and in the nimble way of my seven year old self. I quietly snuck around to find them.

Finally, they appeared a small group of them behind a bunch of scraggly bushes. They were squatting on the ground, playing cards. I wondered to myself, “Why are they behind the bushes?” I asked my mom, it was because they were playing for money, and this ‘gambling’ was not allowed on our public beaches.

When I was little, my parents would often get together with other young persian families, sometimes they were our family and sometimes they were friends. For me they were an entire groups of Aunties and Uncles, I loved to be with them. Here my parents were alike the other grown-ups. They were at ease, they were not lonely, they had friends, that looked like them, spoke like them. It was so very special for me, as I wandered around in smaller, apartment spaces, then larger homes, as the families grew wealthier. One thing I remember very fondly were the card games. Inevitably, at every party, my father would finally, get together to play cards. It was very grown-up. It was what the men would do. Rarely, would women play cards.

As a little girl, I would sit at the card table, and one of my dad's friends or may dad, might ask me to sit next to them for luck. And some of them, when they won, would joyfully give me a little of their money.

Women didn't play cards and they didn't smoke cigarettes either. Women didn't play cards except for my very sopistocated grandma, who played cards regularly with her women friends. Grandma baked great melt in your mouth butter cookies with chocolate chips on them and the most fantastic persian rice dishes, sometimes for forty in her very very tiny kitchen in her and my grandfather's kitchen in queens and grandma played cards. My grandfather would somehow disappear and we would be sent away and grandma set up a card table in her living room and her very sophisticated women friends would come to play cards. Some of them smoked. The ladies brought their teeth to these games, they seemed like serious players. The card playing part of my grandma's life was very important to her, and for me she seemed to turn into someone else when she was getting ready to play. She seemed somehow more worldly.

Amoungst the flotsum and jetsom of the deluge that mass media produced post 911, were a real gem, the bicycle brand,

IRAQI

****Most****

WANTED

Playing Cards

This is how the print on the package of playing cards looked like. I had wanted to include a scan of these card in my dissertation, but I knew I would need copyright, so a description will have to do.

I pick up the box of cards, they are still practically brand new. I love the feel of them in my hands, the soft glossy thick paper cardboard box so perfectly rectangular. The box is printed in camouflage, light green with brown and green designs on them. On the face of the box are the above words. On the long side of the box, is printed,

The United States Playing Card Company

Cincinnati Ohio

On the backside of the box are these words

THE (these next words are obstructed by a the seal that closes the box, that says, USA, HOYLE PRODUCTS, Cincinnati, OH), and then, PLAYING CARDmore words obstructed by the seal....TO PRESENT THE IRAQI MOST WANTED PLAYING CARD DECK, FIRST ISSUED BY THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AND THE U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND IN IRAQ IN APRIL, 2003.

THIS FAITHFUL REPRODUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL DECK INCLUDES ALL 52 WANTED IRAQI PERSONALITIES, PLUS THE TWO JOKERS FEATUREINGN THE FAMOUS HOYLE tm JOKER, AND IS SUITABLE FOR ALL CARD GAME.

Beneath these words are a small facsimilie of the cards, including the ace of spades which is has Saddam Hussein's photograph on it.

I pick the box of card up and turn it in my hands. I have always love the feel of a new box of cards, so full of possibility, play, shuffling, building house card structures . Throughout my life a box of cards has always had a special meaning. How you could always afford a new box of cards to do something with, decorate a funky origami lampshade...I have always love the shape and design of cards, rectangular with rounded edges, cardboard and plastic coated, the fantastic red pattern on the back, the fact that so many playing cards are used in the city of Las Vegas.

I open the box of cards. They have that same slithtey feel in my hands. The perfect fit in my light grasp, always ready for a fancy shuffle and flip. Left hand hold between thumb and forfinger, right hand hold between thumb and third and forth. Left hand grasping the card steady on the width, Right hand on the length slip sliding the cards stacked on each other in the left, up and down, ready for the deal or the shuffle. Then the shuffle, deck of cards in cradled in the left hand, the right hand lifting sections of cards and mixing them into the others, this is what the nice weight and plastic coating is for, I think to myself. I've got pretty agile card hands. So many card games played since childhood, games of solitare on the, on so many kinds of floors, I loved the bold red and black patterns as they took form, I played on beds...on kitchen tables, on persian rugs. The cards slip out of the box without me thinking about and the hands slither them around. We did magic trick with cards. I still remember a few.

And here in my hands are the audacious, Iraqi Most Wanted Playing Cards, The Bicycle company's big fxxx you to me, after so many years of my loyalty to the brand. Yummy like food those cards were to me.



But this insult nothing like what the people who dealt with Patriot act confinement had to deal with. People whose lives were uprooted and terrorized by unfounded detainment. Me, I am hopefully protected by my US citizenship. My parents getting green card and citizenship at my early age, me born here. Oh, fxxx you, US. Thank you for the freedom and the insult. Thanks for promising it and taking it away.

I grew into an identity and then how you treat me is a betrayl of it. nations cannot be our homes, ever but somehow homeland, implies this, “backhome,” the way my mother said it refers to Iran, meant that some ‘where’ was home. And there wasn’t for me, or perhaps it is in some stretch of my imagination, and here, I cobble home together as well as an identity, always, picking and choosing meanings to situations, creating allegiances where by, like so many card hands that shift mid-game, with so many strategies to produce one result or another, and along needing, ‘luck’ at every turn.

The quickly changing, challenging roulette of the moment, margin living in the center, is my center, hold your hand close to your heart, hearts, hearts and spades. Put your heart out on your sleeve but keep it locked in a crystal cage living. Where winning is loosing and loosing is winning. In the always temporary hand where each card could be the joker, because of the way you decide to play it, living. Where it never really needs to matter cause you need to ramble, like the gambler, going, never home, holding, reading tells, telling tales, bluffing, till you let it go, and the walls fall down, and you lay down you hands, and promise you won’t be playing again, playing, praying, for the promise that you won’t have to play the game any longer and you wonder if after all, it was ever a choice, to gamble.

Maan Pharsi harf Nemezanam. (I don't speak Pharsi)

Maan Pharsi harf nemezanam. (I don't speak Pharsi) ^{ix x}

Desiree: Hello!

Jake: Hello!

Desiree: Salaam

Jake: Salaam

Desiree: Haleh Shemah Chetoreh?

Kate (translation): How are you?

Jake: khoobam, Merci.

Kate: (translation) I am fine, thank You.

Desiree: Farsi harf mezanee?

Kate: (translation) Do you speak Pharsi?

Jake: Balay, Bah Shema?

Kate: (translation) Yes, and you?

Desiree: Maan Farsi Mefamam. Maan Pharsi harf nemezanam.

Kate: (translation) I understand Pharsi. I don't speak Pharsi.

Jake: Yanni Chi?

Kate: (translation) What's up with that?

Desiree; Mama e Baba eh Man..my parents are from Iran. They came before I was born. They made sure my first language was English, so I wouldn't have an accent.

Kojah farsi yaad gerfeti?

Kate: (translation) Where did you learn farsi?

Jake : Dar Madreseh Zebaneh Artesh Farsi dars khandam barayeh yek oh neem sall.

Kate: (translation) *(I studied Farsi for a year and a half at the Defense Language Institute.)*

Desiree: what?

Jake: *I learned it at the army language school.*

Desiree: *Oh, you were in the Army?*

Jake: Dar naryeu daryaree boodam. Dar jangha ba Iraq va Afganistan boodam.

Kate: (translation) *(I was in the Navy. I was in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.)*

Desiree: *Oh, you were in the Iraq war?*

Jake: Motarjameh boodam va ruyee keshvarhayeh dooshman parvas kardam. Beh ertebateh mardum gush dadam.

Kate: (translation) *I was an interpreter and I flew over enemy countries. I listened to people's communication.*

Desiree: *What?*

Jake: *I was an interpreter and I flew over enemy countries. I listened to people's communication.*

Desiree: Did you fly over Iran?

Jake: No, thank god.

Desiree: I wish I had learned pharsi.

Jake: I guess I can relate a little. My mom is Mexican and I grew up in the Midwest. So I couldn't speak Spanish with my grandparents and some of my cousins.

Desree: Really, I need to learn Farsi

Jake: Momkeneh metunee Nuryeh Dayaree jovs konee.

Va yadbegeresh mesleh man.

Kate: (translator) Maybe you could join the Navy and learn it like I did.

Desiree; What?

Jake: Maybe you could join the Navy and learn it like I did.

Dorothy and the Illusion of Oz^{xi}

Dorothy, in the ‘Wizard of Oz,’ goes on a heroic journey before returning home. During this journey, she learns that the qualities one feels they lack are really already inside them. When Dorothy finally finds the great Oz, she realizes that behind the ‘smoke and mirrors,’ he is another human being, mortal just like her. She finally wakes from her hurricane-induced dream to find herself at her home in the Kansas Midwest.

Leaving home, then, returning home. What is it, then, that makes home, home? Is it the feeling of the place you have never left? Or is home in the return, is home the place you can return to? Or does a place become a home, when you leave thinking you can always return, and then it becomes home by default, when you realize you cannot return, and then it becomes the place you long for.

With every fiber of my being I question this dichotomy of not being home, then being home, or being home, then not being home. That home is where you are when you stop being not at home. Perhaps, this is because I grew up in a childhood home that was unsafe in so many ways, and

because as an adult the definitions of home have changed so often, and so easily and sometimes, so radically.

In some ways, I am a simple creature, home is that place that I retreat from the outside world to, where I pay rent, so I can keep my things, and sleep in space that is safe and that I can control. In this way, we can understand that, when you sit in an airport seat waiting for your flight and feel comfortable and secure because you have decided to relax, it is a kind of home.

Since a very early age I carried this sense of home with me. Home was where I could feel comfortable and relatively safe.

Now, this sense of home has expanded itself. Caring friends mean home to me. A good breath with my ribcage expanding brings me home. And certain kinds of light or architecture which remind me of the places I have loved the most, bring me home.

Urbana, where I have lived for twenty years is home.

This sense of home though is always unstable. There is always something inside me that feels 'out of place'. Not at home-

There has been too much trouble in my life, too many broken promises, too much upheaval, where there should have been security, too many cultural breaks and fissures. Too little comfort, ease and welcome.

When I was a child, I made home for everyone else. I was a primary cultural translator. I was clever and capable but this doesn't mean I was at home. I was at translations, which was home, in a certain way.

Home is not always easy or good.

You don't always feel at home, at home.

It is a privilege to think about home in the ways that I do- I can wrangle the concept down before it does its damage. That search for the ideal place, or the place where I belong.

Today, I choose to call all of it home-the displacements and the momentary breeches from them, the days when rich meanings seem to have left my life and the days when my life feels full. The me who takes the deep, full breaths and the me, when my ribcage feels caught.

I choose to no longer abandon my experience in a search for home. This changes my approach to home. Will I miss having a heroic journey? Or does this decision mean I have finally reached home.

I believe that in deciding this, or that in this deciding me, the great Oz becomes mortal to me.

When I claim those spaces where I have been disenfranchised, I become home.

I am

And no amount of unhomeliness can take this from me

This is another strategy in a long line of resistant stances, I have approved for myself, as I shed and replace another layer of my camouflaged skin. 'How will this serve me?' I believe this is a step towards a place where the holds of the traumas of my life will loose its grips and the past colors of my camouflaged skins will merge into a coat of many colors-perhaps this decision is just another tone that will meld into the others.

But unlike many other times, I will know that I am deciding. I will know that I am deciding about this moment. And always there are times I long for the days of Oz. Oh, Oz, how I miss you.



The Song of My Grandmother's House-An Installation

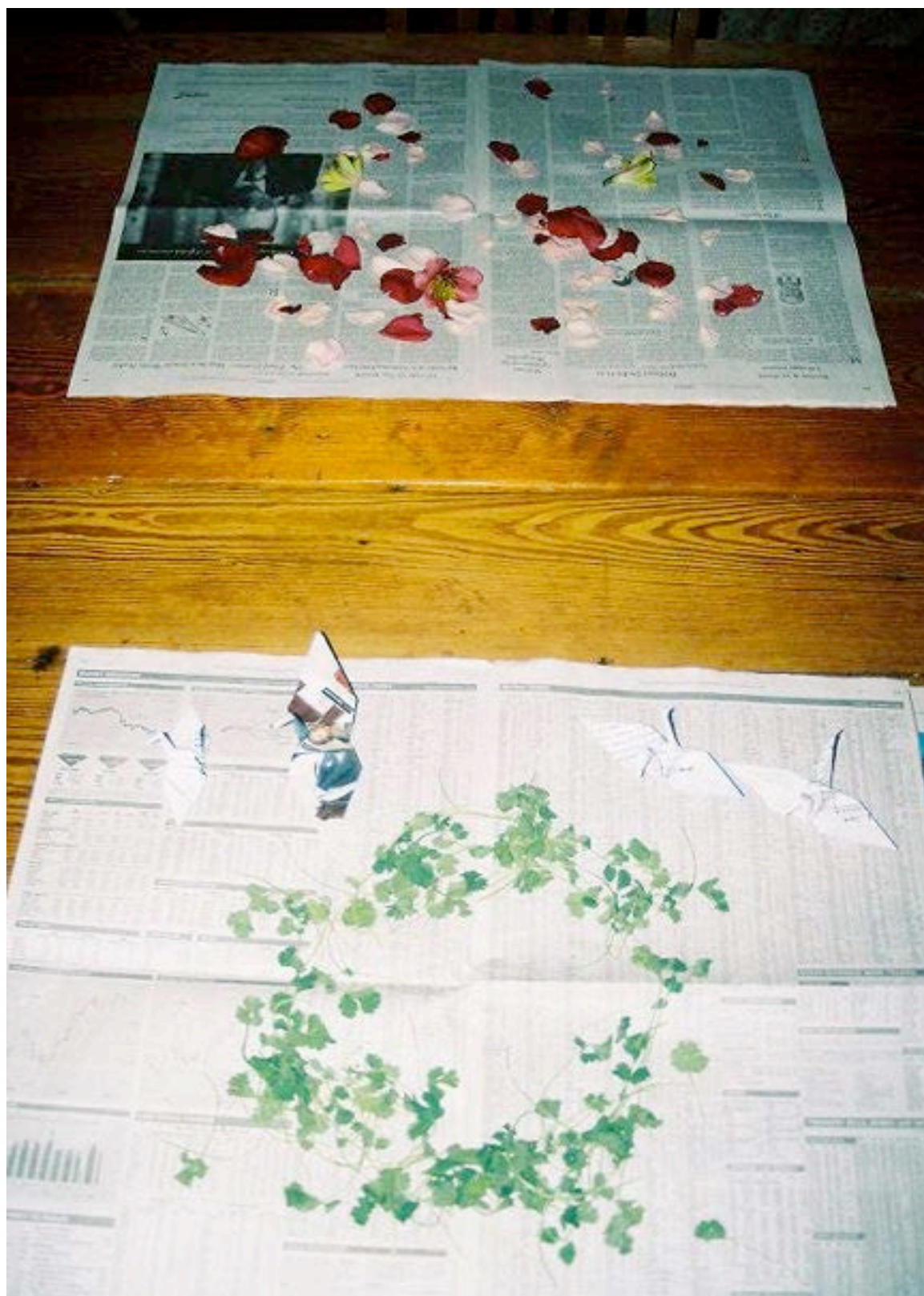
From Home

This piece was originally conceived to answer the question- "How do we know what we know about events on a Global level?" As we live our lives in the spaces we call home, we feel constantly connected to national and international events. Being a daughter to parents who lived the earlier parts of their lives in Iran and a granddaughter to my grandmother who was raised in Iraq, questions of how to reconcile the activities in the middle east, are rooted in my home experience with my parents and grandparents, the food we ate, the holidays we celebrated, the ways in which we call each other dearly-from text I hear that my homelands are in crisis. As I hear from the media stories about bombings and killings, I imagine disruption of homelives that were very much like the ones I knew when growing up- Being raised Jewish in the United States, as the children of Iranian parents. I imagine there is no more natural way to be- As I grew I understood my identity to be conflicted-the US democracy I was raised to believe in and hold dear is severely threatened-the homelands of my cultural identity and religious identity are opposed to one another. But home, the space where I lived and loved, is just home- we live, we survive, we love, we work, for worse and for better, in our person to person relationships in the spaces where we bodies exist. We call each other love. So how is it that I am to reconcile this space of home-this I make with smiles and frowns, grins and tears-sweat and fears-with the language which is offered to explain and conceive of global political situations. I know this knowledge is critical to obtain in order to be an active participant for change. But how is it that I am to apprehend this knowledge which arrives to me as text, media, stories of places where the painful things happen? Especially these days when almost all

news is full of spin, offering conceptual labyrinths for entrance ways, I make this piece- I think about the way we make homes, in our daily living- and how news, important news from outside places influences us- Thanks for coming to my piece and a special thanks to all my loves- who make home with me-near and far-everyday and in the imaginary-may love prevail-Prayers for a holy and beautiful peace.

Desiree





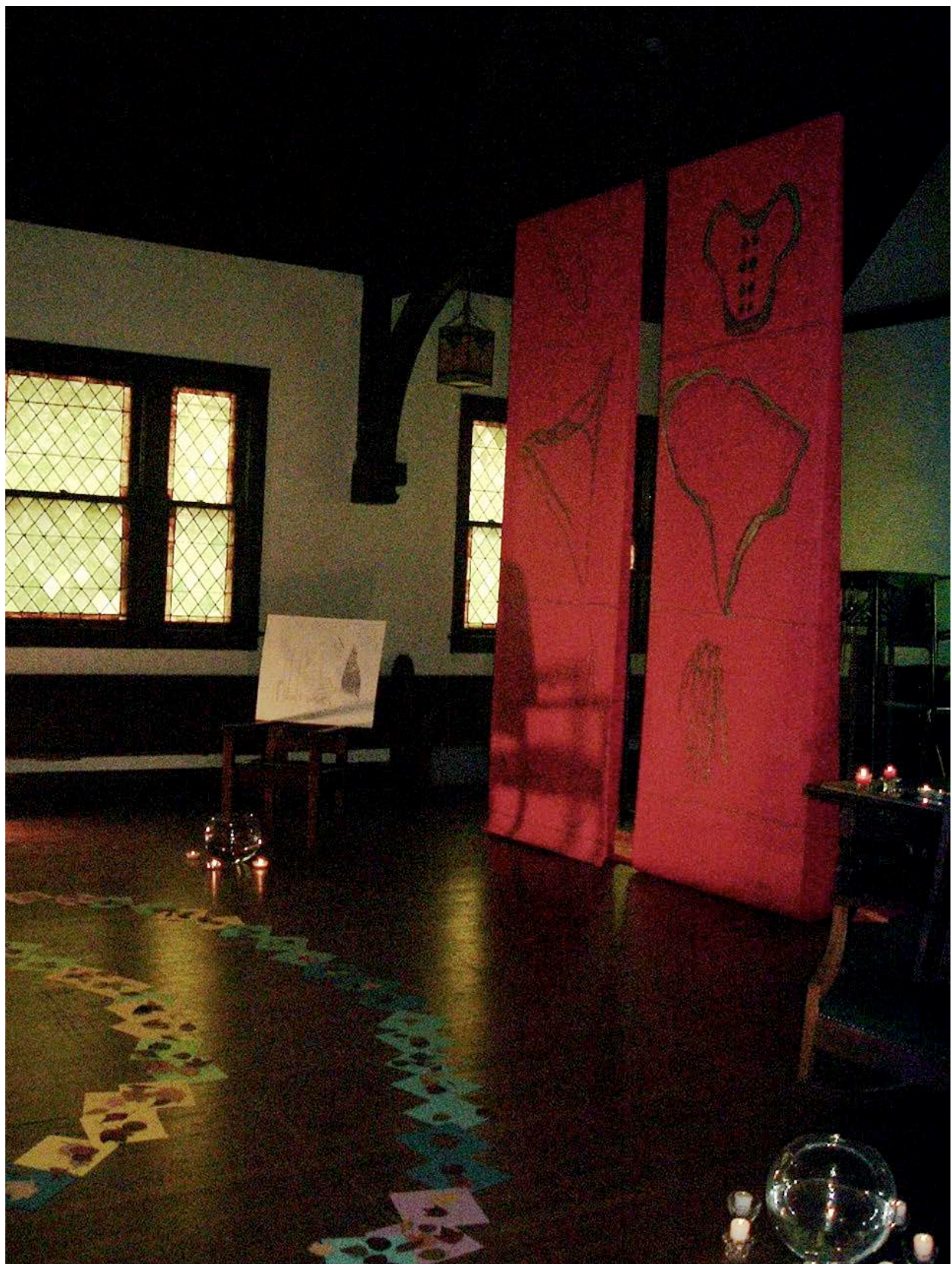


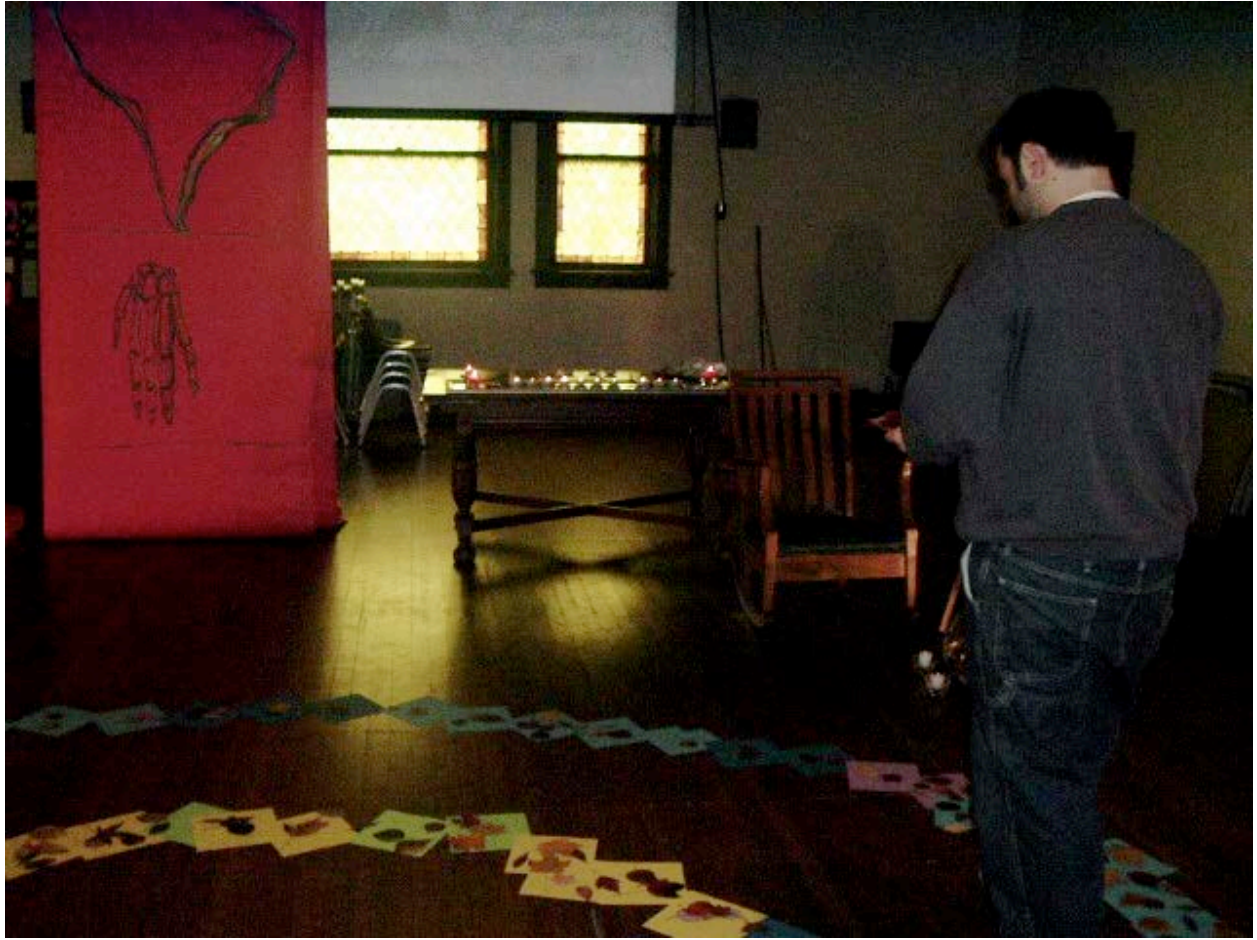






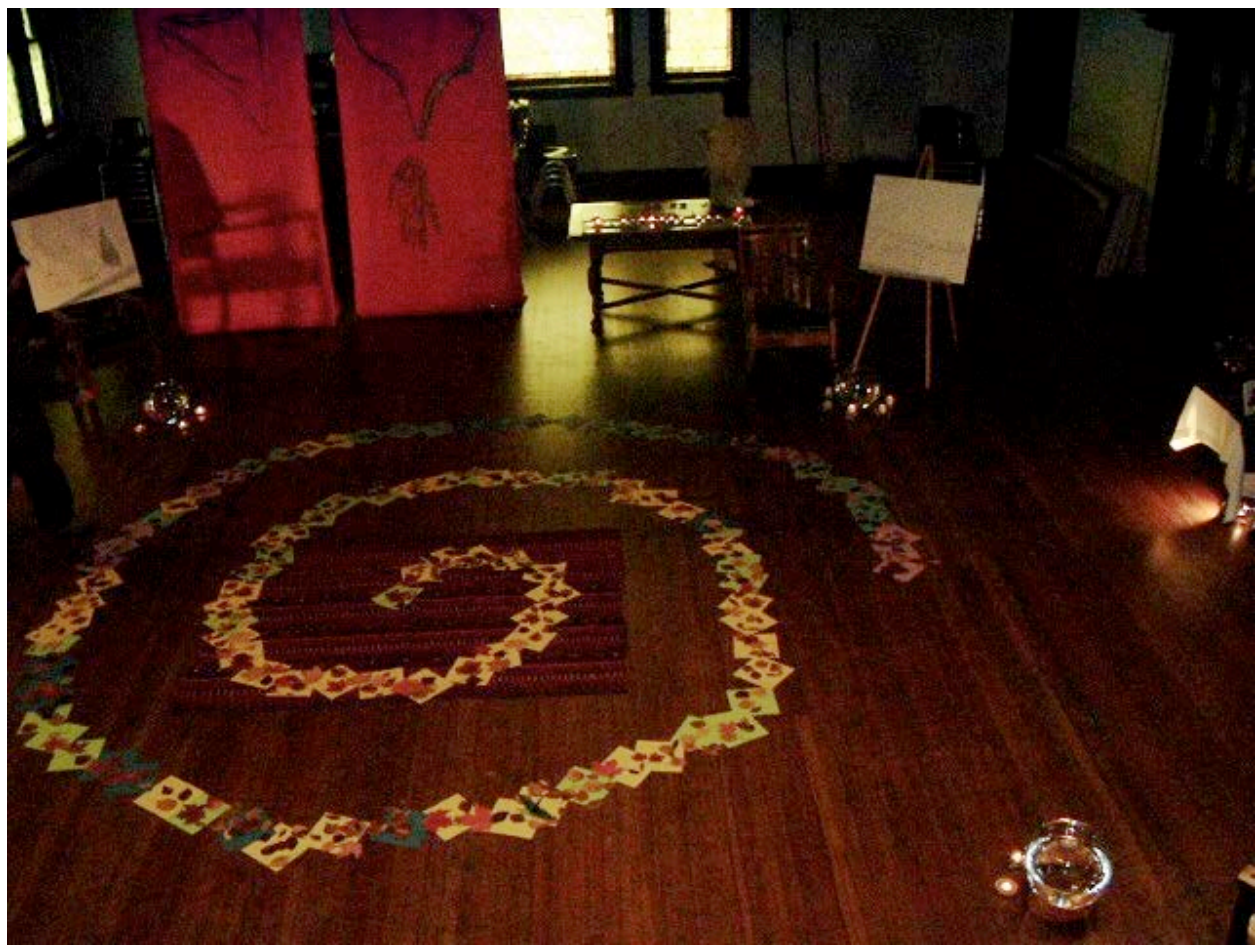
















Book Two

Chapter Five: Share Air

We live together on earth.

And together

We sing, move, breathe, talk and gesture.

We shake and tremble.

We join, rejoin and separate ourselves.

We scream, laugh, hollar. We love, hurt.

We take and give.

We live together, separate and in groups. We organize. We are organized

And we get trapped

And untrapped.

We go until

There is no road

And take the path to the left or

Right

Or simply stop.

Some have deeper and kinder hearts

Than others

But we do live together

With one another

Primarily my work involves inquiry into the ways that we are with each other.

How do we make this world together?

The material of the earth, forced and formed, into the ways we conceptualize (Heidegger)

Our worlds, roads, elevators, microwave ovens, space ships-

The larger and multiple patterns

By which we enter space, make this place

Where we live

For better or worse and

We leave our

Markers,

Money, excess, debt

Guns, military flight patterns like geese in formation

To nudge, force and remind others

Of the order

That we or others have

Conceptualized.

Power

Puts us in our place

As defined by

Others.

In collectives,

By choice,

We may join,
As a gentle breeze
Or a joyful shout
We find
Ourselves
In places
Where we belong

This song is about questions and some answers toward
Finding ourselves myself belonging
Choosing the conditions
Of where
I am
Different than
Who I should be
Where I should belong
Or who I am meant to be
Or where I am meant to belong
And the affective particularities
of these moments

What is possible to choose?
What is our capacity

If we are to understand

Ourselves as a whole

And if we walk

With a constant

Attention to the

Good, making

Good

As we

Go

What kinds of possibilities

Does this enable?

As bodies our knowledge occurs

and

The power of love holds us to its principles.

























Chapter Six: Resistance Through Presence: Movement Improvisation in Performance Ethnography

This piece is an alternative text written in multiple timbres. It strategizes resistance from the view of the multiple perspectives of the embodied person, it is in itself written in many voices.

You as the reader are welcome to apprehend this text in a way different than you might otherwise interpret a more orthodox scholarly work

Prelude:

The body's interpretive capabilities in the process of meaning making is drawing attention in the field of Cultural Studies. Authors Michel DeCerteau (Certeau, 1998), and Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1998) approach meaning making as practice enacted in time and space by human beings. Renato Rosaldo (1989) and Eugene Gendlin (Gendlin) use a process model to describe the ways kinds of cultural time and space are conducted through bodily activity. Thinker Brian Massumi (Massumi, 2002) guides us through the ways that identity and spatial meaning are generated through the bodies spatial activity and proprioceptive perception. This chapter brings to the discussion, the ways that insights drawn from the practice of Somatics and its philosophy can affect cultural resistance, in the form of meaning making, through the problems of relationality. This cultural resistance is enacted through bodily processes (the body that is becoming) and bodily perception, that have been coerced into oppressive proprioceptive knowing through colonial and neo-colonial relational activity.

This paper frames a possibility for freeing the body's meaning and space making processes from social disciplining as an activity of resistance. Discussions of resistance

are central to the field of cultural studies. At a recent international cultural studies conference, a room sat in discussion with a leading cultural studies scholar. He made the argument that in the current changing climate, social and cultural resistances were no longer effective. My hand shot up in the air. I made the point that one could not understand the effectiveness of other's actions of resistance, unless the entire standpoint of the person who is acting is understood. I believe that for many people of marginalized groups, daily life is filled with actions of resistance both large and small. That knowledge of systems of oppression are well understood by many of those who live in their grip. That people who face the effects of systematized daily oppression, make hourly, daily, monthly, yearly and decade long decisions, about themselves and their actions that are designed and understood to be in resistance to these systems. I understand that for many, getting through a day of oppressive work conditions, with the hope that another day will be better, is an act of resistance. I know that for many to maintain the sense of self, which they choose and understand for themselves, in the atmosphere of symbolic representation designed to crush their dignity is an act of resistance. And for some waking up to greet the next day is an act of resistance. There is music made, there are artworks, marches and parades. These acts of cultural and social resistance occur on a moment to moment basis, by people, small groups, and large. In most cases these actors of resistance have a knowledge of the activities of the cultures and societies around them, keener than any educated outsider ever would. And that these actions of resistance need to be understood as even more powerful, as the world moves into the chokehold of the actions of Globalization.

Introduction

This chapter introduces some aspects of a movement methodology which (I am) is/in the process of development. I will begin to explore a performance aesthetic. Much of the work of Michel Foucault has taken a historical view of the philosophical and social aspects of institutional disciplining of the body within a generally European context. He has discussed at length this topic in terms of disciplining through medicine, sexuality and punishment. The works of many Post-Colonial writers, activists and artists have reflected their understanding of oppressive action on the meaning making practices of the body/mind. Leaders of Post-Colonial movements have also configured powerful resistant practices based in the knowledge of the meaning making practice of the body/mind. Important writers of the anti-neo-colonial movement have begun to delve into understandings of the body/mind as processors of meaning and have located the location for symbolic resistance, through oppositional consciousness, at this site. My own interests as an artist and intellectual scholar travel a pathway like this as well. As an artist, I am active in making pieces whose process peel dominant meanings off of the psycho-physical mechanisms of performers and participants, leaving our corporeality in a space for re-becoming. As an intellectual person, I am interested in thinking through the performativity of culture, in the process of embodiment. Culture needs to be understood as taking place in actual moments of living a sensory life. In the literature we are often portrayed as beings without bodies. I call for a turn in the cultural and performance studies literature where the body is positioned in the text, so we can then re-position it in our worlds. I ask that we consider the meaning making processes of bodies when making our understandings. As a scholar, I follow that trail markings of these ideas. As an activist, I strive to meet ideas of resistance through presence-ful action. As a human being I hope to bring all of these selves together, in this moment.

As a member of marginalized populations, I/we are led to cut parts of myself off from others. Social spaces just do not make room for the knowings of my/our parts to exist together, my/our richness and power would overwhelm the circuitry of the smallness we are meant to inhabit. The ferocious beauty of our full beings, committed with deep integrity to justice and dignity that righteously belongs to each one of us, in each single moment we inhabit on earth and its continuums, shake down the death of the spaces that cut into us. In a world where the body and mind is considered the same, our deep commitment creates the justice we seek. In the world we inhabit now, our stance is every thing.

.....

“It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world.” (Fanon, 1967, p. 231)

Understandings of Body Subjectivity in the Post-Colonial-Frantz Fanon

Post-Colonial, author Frantz Fanon in “Black Skin, White Masks” talks about the problematization of the development of the colonized person’s body schema in the following lines. “Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person consciousness. The body is surrounded by certain uncertainty.” (Fanon, 1967, p. 110-111).

It is through the objectifying practice of stereotyping which Fanon views these difficulties, which using his words, “burst(s)” us apart. Split and distorts.

His response to the phrase,

“Look a Negro....”

“Sealed into that crushing objecthood, I turned beseechingly to others. Their attention was a liberation, running over my body suddenly abraded into nonbeing, endowing me once more with an agility that I had thought lost, and by taking me out of the world, restoring me to it. But just as I reached the other side, I stumbled, and the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye....I burst apart. Now the fragments have been put together by another self” (Fanon, 1967, p 109).

The bodily schema, a process of “the composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world,” (Fanon, 1967, p. 111) is a “structuring of the self and of the world, definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world.” (Fanon, 1967, p.111). Our bodily schemas are the way we conduct ourselves as a self in the world of space. It is also the way that we make that world of space. For Fanon, this body consciousness, this self, as it occurs through relationship, can be shattered or distorted by objectification, or other means of oppression. Body consciousness, made in the process of relationship, is not only the means by which we compose ourselves, in tandem with the way that the world space around us is composed, it is also that way that we do all of these things through sense knowledge.

Fanon describe sense knowledge, here,

“I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes lying at the other end of the table. The matches, however, are in the drawer on the left, and I shall have to lean back slightly. And all these movements are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge” (Fanon, 1967, p 111)

All of this taken into account, we can understand through Fanon’s writing, the effects of domination, whether it be cultural or physical on the process of the composing of the self, and

hence, our world of space, is on the level of the sensory, in the knowledge implicit in proprioception. As selves split and shatter, our knowledge of our self as we actually move through the world lacks the empowering agency of wholeness. And hence, so does our world of space.

.....

“Caminante no hay puentes, se hace puentes al andar.” (Voyager there are no bridges, one makes them as one walks.) Gloria Anzaldua (Sandoval, 2000, p. 40)

Oppositional Consciousness- US Third World Feminism, and a Methodology for Resistance in the Post-Modern World

Chela Sandoval in “Methodology of the Oppressed”, illustrates a method at the level of meaning and subjectivity, that she is useful in libratory practice in the postmodern period.

Sandoval posits F. Jamison’s claims about post-modern subjectivity at the bedrock of her argument. Jamison claims that the de-centering caused by fragmented psychic condition of the Post-Modern Western subject, leaves us needing for the elements of modern subjectivities, to create a condition of social change. Jamison grieves, the “style in the sense of the unique and personal, the end of the distinctive brush stroke and the end of feeling, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling” for this end (quoted in Sandoval, 2000, p 20.1). Jamison describes the post-modern subject, as de-centered subject, living in an architecture that further ruptures the sense of a grounded, directed, unified self, that can make a personal mark.

“Buildings are constructed without any single main entrance (there are usually several) and without any central meeting place, (but rather, many small areas, any of which can temporarily

serve as a stopping point for separated travelers who are similarly displaced and disoriented).
“(Jamison, quoted in Sandoval, 2000, p 25)

Jamison asserts that post-modern cityscapes replicate in human consciousness, “the same decentering and disorganization modeled in the cities concrete and glass realities” (Jamison, quoted in Sandoval, 2000, p. 25). The buildings’ structures and the psychic qualities of its inhabitants, symbiotically reflecting the larger organization of multi-national capitalism in a holographic model of reality. In this reality, citizen-subjects are groundless, left
“mesmerized...by the schizophrenic, metonymic psychic and material conditions....light(ing) from experience to experience, object to object...(in spaces where) all aesthetic formations, experiences, even being itself becomes...a simple technology” of globalizing capitalism. (Jamison, quoted in Sandoval, 2000, p 25). Jamison claims a connection between spatial confusion and psychic confusion, through a technic of the body.

Sandoval takes it from here, presenting the Methodology of the Oppressed, the method of oppositional consciousness proposed by US third world feminists, wherein through traveling multiple socio-cultural trajectories, one places oneself appropriately for an activism of being. In Sandoval’s model, morphing and shifting subjectivities replace the “ongoing constitution and disintegration” of post-modern subjectivity, which Jamison fears. Because of the benefits of multiple vantage points, a sense of instability of place is empowering, as one may then choose to constitute themselves, through meaning making, tactically, through social relationship, on different symbolic trajectories, towards liberation. This methodology, the one used by people who were colonized and marginalized throughout the Modern period, those who did not have the benefits of the centered and grounded subjectivity, which modernity granted some of its citizen-

subjects, is one that Sandoval suggests might be employed by all citizen-subjects of the post-modern period, now that the center has been erased.

Jamison's concerns are key and Sandoval's suggestions are nothing less than brilliant and extraordinarily helpful. My question here lies in the question of corporeality. As Jamison suggests there are connections between the designed spaces we encounter and the psychic conditions by which we receive the world. Sandoval's argument suggests that there is a strong significance in the way that the self is situated and this situatedness can be understood as a technology. The way the body inhabits places is important in both of these arguments, for Jamison, in how we find or do not find ourselves grounded in a 'reality', for Sandoval, it enables the way that we position our subjectivity to allow and harness meaning. The question of interest for me here is how the body itself supports these functions. As Fanon suggests above, the body schema, the way that one's self is composed in the world, and one makes the world space one inhabits, is understood and created through the implicit knowledge of the body. How can we understand the way we are in our bodies, or more to the point, the way the body works in the process of symbolic meaning making? As examples generated by Sandoval point to concerns of spatiality, in the processes of subjectivity which liberates, in general, this aspect of knowing, bodily knowing, as culture, is missing from the literature of cultural analysis. The way that we know and make the world on the sensory level is key in the many interactions of our daily life, and paramount in the way that we understand ourselves and relate to one another. This kind of communication is a cultural world in itself. A study of the process of body knowing, with relation to the paradigm of meaning making as possible intervention in physical and cultural domination will broaden our ability to strategize our futures. This aspect of our being, in

particular the ability to resist through technics of presence (one's way of entering space) has been used in artistic and political movement throughout the post-colonial period.

Art, Activism and Cultural Intervention Through Presence

Post-Colonial artists and activists, artists of the Neo-Concrete movement in Brazil (1960), and activists of the American Civil Rights sit-in movements worked with the felt sense body to create methods of intervention. The work of Neo-Concrete art brought into focus the participant's (non-spectator) role in meaning make through wear or holding the artifacts. The meaning of the pieces were only available along with the participant's spatial knowledge, as they interacted with the pieces (Yomtoob, 2004). In this way the production of subjective relationality was the activity associated with the piece. This was work that placed a focus on the meaning making activity of the moment. Activists in the Civil Rights movement lunch counter sit-ins, not only challenged the meaning of spaces by being present where they weren't thought of belonging, but further challenged established meaning by reacting to taunts and attempted arrests with an attitude/stance of compassion (Halberstam, 1998, p. 77-81), thus subverting the atmosphere of hatred. Their actions are particularly interesting with regards to the power of meaning making through presence. While the established tacit text about African-Americans at these lunch counters was of non-access, the attitudinal stance was one of hate. For the Civil Rights Movement activists to react to the hatred, with a defensive posture would allow the tone of the sit-ins to be established by the dominant culture. The activists instead chose their attitude, their presence, one of compassion. This tactical move, instead of pushing further the atmosphere that the oppressors created, actions answering the questions in the agenda the oppressors had set

forth, shifted the spatial interaction in the direction which the activists chose. The defining mood of the activity was set by the behavior of the activist, subverting the power of the atmosphere, the affect of hatred. As presence in behavior defines how the behavior its meaning, the activist's choices about presence, overturned the defining mood of hatred, and eventually, these activities no longer supported the dominant tacit cultural text of oppression. If the activities and attitudes of behavior no longer uphold ideology, ideology falls.

.....

“For hours I would stand quite still, my two hands folded between my breasts, covering the solar plexus. My mother often became alarmed to see me remain for such long intervals quite motionless as if in a trance—but I was seeking and I finally discovered the central spring of all movements, the crate of motor power, the unity from which all diversities of movements are born” (Duncan, 1927, p. 75)

A Somatics Based Methodology for Understanding the Effects of Oppression on Presence.

It has been my project to understand the effects oppression has on the felt sense body and the ways that bodily presence can be used in resistance toward the effects of oppression and domination. What can be learned by looking at the way that we make meaning in the world, through our bodies, at the intersection of symbolic reading, emotion and the felt sense? Is there a bio-technology that can throw off the splits and fissures of domination and oppression in the body schema? Are there ways that we can free ourselves from the body disciplining mechanisms of the dominant culture, whether it be the way that work is performed, education is enacted or in the way that architecture trains us to perceive shape in the world?

My explorations have been made in the form of auto-ethnographic performance art. If I am to understand space and the body, I believe this work must be done with space and the body. It is a question of performativity that I ask here. How do we know who we are and what we know, as we move through the world, relating to it as we do? What are the aesthetics of daily culture that inform the way we perform ourselves?

And what are the ways that we can intervene?

The inquiries and subsequent auto-ethnographic pieces I make are performative interventions in the social disciplining action on the body. Norman Denzin, leader in the field of Qualitative Research categorizes the performative in this type of autoethnography as follows:

Pedagogically, ideologically, the performative becomes an act of doing (Giroux 2000a:135), a dialogic way of being in the world, a way of grounding performances in the concrete situations of the present. The performative becomes a way of interrogating how “objects, discourses, and practices construct possibilities for and constraints on citizenship”(Nelson and Gaonkar 1996:7; quoted in Giroux 2000a:134). The stance connects the biographical and the personal to the pedagogical and the performative.

(Denzin, 2003, p 239)

In this way I hope to make a difference in the world through my performances, enacting oppositional performative presences, in very much the same way the actors in the lunch-counter sit-ins did. To be different, than ways otherwise called for in the world, through connecting in presence, while making meaning in the body.

My work consists of a qualitative research methodology based in the philosophies, psychology and practices of Somatics. Somatics is an understanding of the mind and the body, as one, is a performative intervention in the ontological framework of the body mind split, the underpinning

for the body concept in the Western World. I carry out my work through multiple Somatic's frameworks. That the body is made by space, as it makes space is explored by many authors (Fanon, 1967, p.111) (Lefebvre, 1984). Somatics teaches us, in many conceptualizations, the ways the body does this. The question of universality arises. My answer is that I believe that the phenomenon found in somatics practices can be observed in many human bodies (not all), but would have different explanations in different worlds, these explanations having a great deal of importance in terms of how the body's process of meaning making occurs. I believe the principles drawn from somatics practices are generalities, and have been understood through the being of bodies throughout the world (the practices are used by people around the globe).

The movement methodology I use is an amalgam of somatics practices I have learned throughout the years. While the practices are all different, they have at their basis an understanding of the way that one apprehends the world on a sensory level. They help me to access what is behind the way that I understand myself and the world as I move through it. Right now the primary somatics techniques I work with are Jin Shin Jyutsu (Burmeister, 1997), Alexander Technique, Bartenieff (Hackney, 2000), Focusing (Gendlin, 1979) and the Dreaming Body (Mindell, 2000). Jin Shin Jyutsu is work that opens energy pathways to balance emotional conditions. Alexander Technique works with conscious control of the body/mind to teach one to bypass habits of the body/mind. Bartenieff, I use for developmental movement sequences. Focusing, a body based psychological practice, gives one an entrance into the place where sensation, understanding and cognition are formed on the body. Naming from this place is key to the work, breaking open the languages which impose from without, to describe our experience. The Dreaming Body is way to work with the waking dream, as it arises with physical sensation.

My practice is twofold, one is a training which I work with. The training is constantly being developed. The training is meant for me to become closer to the expressive and comprehending impulses of my body, as it moves through space in relationship, while tuning into the impact different states have on my musculature and nervous system. Right now, for example, in studio, I work with sensing very carefully the impulses of my nervous systems, while following through on the imagistic and aural messages of the waking and sleeping dreams, as they emerge. The nervous system work is based in the fine-tuning of reflex-like movement, my practice derived from learnings in the Dart Procedure and Alexander technique. Through this work, I can understand how my habitual movement, and the habitual perceptual patterning through which I apprehend the world, is laid on top of the fine impulses of the motor-nervous system, bringing myself back to some kind of a new present, by learning to bypass my character conditioning. I use the dreaming work, alongside these explorations, peeling back the layers of messages on an imagistic and aural level. I believe that the images and sounds of the dreaming are always active in our consciousness, guiding us through our lives in space. To attend to them fully, giving the messages a chance to be heard and followed changes the nature of their resonance as I move through my daily life. While this work is imagistic and aural, it is of the body, and the combination of the work with the nervous system and the dreaming is a very powerful process that takes me through layers of perceptual/physical changes very quickly. It is work that unravels the molds that have been incorporated into my perception/presence (presence being the outside manifestation of perception), either through trauma, cultural domination or the social disciplining of the body.

The second aspect of my practice is the one by which through active meditation, I work with body armoring, and through this process develop movement for my pieces. It is based in the

somatic psychologies called Hakomi (Kurtz, 1990) and Focusing, (Gendlin,1979). Both of these practices work with the way body sensation, relationship, and perception form meaning on a bodily level. Hakomi's philosophy deals with the way experience impacts our nervous system to make meaning. Through paying mindful attention to sensation and the meanings behind it, one is lead to an unraveling of key experiences and how they have impacted our felt-sense perception. Focusing works in very much the same way, but with an emphasis on language. Focusing works to teach people to be active in the naming of their experience, as it is understood deeply on a felt sense level. This active naming of experience, on the basic level of sensation, brings experience and language into the realm of subjectivity, in a way which one has more agency in meaning making. Both of these practices are present in my movement practice, where I move, simply, focusing on sensation, in the way that sensation moves me. During the practice, I understand how different stances, physical attitude, ways that I enter the world are connected to concepts that belong to others, and pull these things more fully into my own. Key moments from this meditation are pulled into my performance pieces.

Then the question becomes, what formal elements can I use to compose these movement fragments into pieces that are meaningful to audience/participants. I want to make movement pieces that bring people back to their own experience, something which enables them to understand the world differently in their everyday perceptive/presencing practice.

To create a third space for communication and change on the perceptive/presencing level. (Heim, 1998, p. 97-101) (Denzin, 2003).

.....

I came, then, to formulate the concept of the 'suprasensorial'It is an attempt to generate creative exercises through increasingly open propositions, dispensing with even the object as it

has come to be categorized. These are not painting-sculpture-poem fusions, palpable works, though they may exhibit this aspect: they are directed at the senses in order that, through them; through ‘total perception’, they may lead the individual to a ‘suprasensation’, to the expansion of his usual sensory capacities, to the discovery of his of his internal creative centre, of his dormant expressive spontaneity, lined to the quotidian.- Brazilian Neo-Concrete Artist Helio Oiticica (Oiticica,1992, p128).

Developing an Aesthetic based in Relationality

It would be my hope to begin to develop an aesthetic base in the I-thou concept of Martin Buber,

The world is two fold for man in accordance with the two basic words he can speak.

The basic words are not single words but word pairs.

One basic word is the word pair I-You.

The other basic word is the word pair I-it; but this basic word is not changed when He or She takes the place of It.

Thus the I of man is also twofold.

For the I of the basic word I-You is different from that in the basic word I-It.

Basic words do not state something that might exist outside them; by being spoken they establish a mode of existence.

Basic words are spoken with one’s being.

When one says You, the I of the word pair I-It is said, too.

The basic word I-It can never be spoken with one’s whole being. (Buber, 1970, pg 54)

It is the relationality of the I and thou, that I seek to encourage in my pieces. For us, the performers and the audience/participants to be able to see each other as vulnerable human

beings, beyond our social roles (Levinas, Nemo, 1985, p. 86). This in itself would work to break out of certain negative psycho-physical training of the society.

The following exploration of possible aesthetic directions for my pieces will be in two parts: 1) possibilities for audience to become participants- deep listening; the work of Pauline Oliveros and 2) the value of dialogical intertextuality in performance.

Audience Participants-The Work of Pauline Oliveros

The work of composer Pauline Oliveros presents profound options for social change on the level of consciousness. Her “Deep Listening” compositions work in the following way. For Oliveros, the practice of listening deeply is, “learning to expand the perception of sounds to include the whole space/time continuum of sound-encountering the vastness and complexities of sound as much as possible” (Oliveros, 2005, xxiii). When doing this one ought to also, “target a sound or sequence of sounds as a focus....(and) perceive the detail or trajectory of the sound” (Oliveros, 2005, xxiii). For a practice of Deep Listening one needs to listen to the details of the sound, with a return to the whole of sound in the space/time continuum. This kind of fully present listening breaks down the stereotypical and hierarchal notions one lives within in their sound environment. (Oliveros, 2005). When listening completely to their sound environment one opens more fully on a sensory level to the environment they are in, breaking through the meaning patterning of sound.

Deep Listening group pieces take a variety of forms. They serve as a vehicle for a group exploration of the sensory perceptual opening of deep listening. For example, a group piece would involve a group of people following these instructions.

The New Sound Meditation (1989)

Listen

During any one breath

Make a sound

Breathe

Listen outwardly for a sound

Breathe

Listen Inwardly

Breathe

Make a new sound that no else has made

Breathe

Continue this cycle till there are no new more new sounds. (Oliveros, 2005)

In this piece the sonic environment is completely created by the sounds of the participants as they listen deeply to one another, listening deeply. The piece is an action of collective perceptual opening, and recognition of one another in relationships that begin to break the stereotyping of the I/it relationship. The participants become more to one another, as they inhabit a space where sound hierarchy and meaning is expanded.

Perhaps, this type of idea can be expanded into pieces where the audience/participants have contact with each other in ways other than sound. Different kinds of hand contact throughout the piece or patterns of moving together, might be useful, or other sound experiments, such as Oliveros', in junction with a movement piece might be a valuable experiment for me.

The Value of Dialogical Intertextuality in Performance

Because of the conditions of collusion, marginalization and the splitting which traumatic events incur, it is problematic to tell the story of oppressed people in the form of a grand narrative. As Sandoval (see above) has pointed out, a strategy for marginalized people is to make their lives, and live their subjectivity, through codes with referents positioned on multiple trajectories, as opposed to codes with referents based in a single center. In order for the exposition or showing of these life conditions to not become mythological (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001, p 68), it is necessary for works to employ techniques which include the richness of multiple viewpoints. My own works are not for the telling of a historical or ethnographic truth, but an exploration of possibilities, possible ways in which oppressions occurs, possibilities for resistant presences. My work is for uncovering and recovering moments and stories, which by their very nature are not performable as a single truth. The employment of multiple texts, telling and showing multiple viewpoints, with differing intersections and trajectories are necessary to show the kinds of things I want to show. For as the lived experience of any human being can never be packaged into a single narrative, more so are the lived experience of a person with experiences of marginalization. "History is a non-linear struggle between irreconcilable stories" (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001, p. 70).

Conclusion

On a whole we are living in a difficult moment on earth. War and economic colonization has run rampant. The list of social ills are so long that to begin to contemplate them is painful. There are many solutions and many paths towards hope and change. I have always believed in the power of the human attitude to bring change, and for so many, including myself, in various points of my life, there is not much more than this to work with. Human beings are creative and strong

creatures with a great capacity for love. Symbolic and performative understandings, which help to make changes in the material world, have been used successfully in many struggles. If these kinds of tactics are useful in promoting social justice, while bringing one closer to their integrity, and the values that they hold dear, it is a work worth investing in. My explorations with somatics practices, and the performances which have come about through them, have been empowering for me, in the way that I understand the process by which I understand others and myself in space. From the feedback I have gotten from the audience/participants in my installations and performances, I understand that there has been a positive impact on them as well. It is my hope to continue working in this way with hopes of facilitating a positive direction.

Chapter Seven: Somatics and Performativity: The Felt Sense Body, The Protonorm of Love and the Complicated Reality of Relationship

Part One A-Dance Performance, Example 1

The hallways of the University math building were overflowing with an unusual crowd. On a Sunday evening four choreographers planned a site-specific piece. The dancers were well trained and the choreographers knowledgeable and capable.

But the run was in disorder.

We, the “audience”, were lead through the narrow hallways and florescent-lit classrooms, as the performance had been planned in certain sequences, with the aid of a guide and maps to lead us on a tour. In the different spaces were dances and small plays, commenting on what normally goes on in the spaces.

The pieces were thought provoking, well choreographed, and there was something about the way that the ‘audience’ was not making it to see the performances at the right time, that threw the work into chaos. The dancers continued as instructed. The audience moved through the space in bewilderment, as to what went next. We wandered through the halls in very much the way freshman new at the University would. From time to time, I would encounter choreographers, alone or in pairs, working to repair the rupture in time which stopped the piece from moving in accordance with their plans. They were in various states of confusion and frustration, as they worked, herding the crowd through the time/space grid to get things back to working order.

The performances themselves were disruptive to the everyday order which occurred in these spaces, either making commentary on issues of education or social interaction. Now,

because of the time/space problem another level was added to the disrupting sense of the pieces. Our roles as audience, performers and choreographers were being disrupted as the dancers worked, troubled, to stay true to the performance. New shadows of meaning were cast onto the performance.

It was a delightful surprise to see the choreographers engaged in the moment of living, as they strove to untangle the process that was before them. Trying to repair the confusion and the uncertainty of what was to come next brought a level of honesty and substance to the performance.

For me most fascinating of all was how we as an audience responded. Lost and bewildered, not sure what to do next, each of us took to the space in a more personal, almost a more everyday way. But still influenced by the idea that this was meant to be a performance. Our roles as spectator, audience, had been disrupted.

Each of us tried to maintain the respectful attitude of watching, as one normally does for a performance, while trying to make our way through the piece. Multiple layers of emotion, roles and meanings were brought to this moment. Each of us now brought to this experience, a way of receiving the performance, two steps away from how an audience behaves, even as it is loosened up at a site-specific work. The sense of having to figure out where to go next and what was happening-led to a disorganization in the usual attention spectator's give. We were now involved on a different level. We were behaving in a way that was somewhere between the feeling of an everyday attention, where one is trying to figure out what is going on in our own flow of movement, and the attention of a crowd respectfully interested in the work they are there to see.

This 'extra' attention which the dancers, choreographers, and 'audience' leant to the performance a layer of meaning that would not have occurred if the performance had gone as

planned. This layer of meaning served to fill out the performance experience in a way that went beyond most other performance experiences. As we move through our daily lives, the world is made by the kind of attention we give to it, the relationship we have to it.

This performance through its deliberate attempts, mixed with the time/space meaning-making world, as it happens, brought me one step towards understanding the genre of dance- if its power were to be used to interfere with the disciplining power of bio-politics.

For the audience, whose attention was diffused enough, confused enough, who did not experience these moments with the normal attention for viewing, we realized ourselves in performance, in a different kind of way. Not comprehending the flow of the piece, our movement sensory system, was newly awakened. There to watch a dance piece, we were confused by the sight of the harried choreographers, the perfection, the hidden authority of ‘the dance’ was gone. In this piece we were simply human beings trying to bring order back to our understanding. While the dancers maintained their roles, the audience reception of the piece went beyond mere spectatorship to a place where we were faced with the density of our experience as space making creatures. As the staging of the piece, in the halls of the University math building, was meant to disrupt the sense of space we normally have, the added complication of space/time confusion created a dimension of disruption which could not have happened if planned.

The audience had the chance to glimpse at themselves as performers.

I walked away strangely satisfied. For this moment I understood how the art of dance might have the power to transform ways of being as movement. I understood that the kind of transformation that could occur through dance might have the power to disrupt the negative effects of the disciplining of the body/mind which happens through the habitual patterning of the senses.

Part One B- Dance Performance, Example 2

With the encouragement of my teacher in movement studies, I buy a ticket for the opening night show of a dance concert. The choreographer of this show is billed as the greatest American choreographer actively working. At the last moment, I begrudgingly give my credit card numbers over the phone, purchasing a \$35.00 ticket to see this show at the large, university sponsored performing arts center four blocks from my home. I am usually suspect of the 'world class' acts brought to the center. For all of the celebration around them, they are normally not nearly as interesting to me as the more home made acts of my fellow students or the less acclaimed acts that tour the circuit. You can see these show for \$10.00 at a local club, for free at the music school or without top billing at the performing arts center. But because I am trying to pull information about dance around me, in order to expand and inform my work, I decide to go.

The scene at the performing arts center was the usual. Women in clickity-clack shoes and done up hair with their male partners, dressed in suits, on a date. There was the occasional group of students or dancers, as well. I entered the large auditorium, with a mood of excitement and a hint of caution, sat down and waited for the show to begin.

The first ten minutes of the concert was so beautiful it brought tears to my eyes. The talented well-trained bodies moved beautifully to time in the music. The costumes and scenery were first-rate.

Fifteen minutes into the show another emotion overwhelmed me. As I watched the lithe dancers, in their perfectly choreographed movement on the grand stage, I realized that the show was devoid of substance. The music was beautiful, certain themes were touched upon. But the piece communicated nothing. It was empty. It was evident that the skills of the choreographer were plentiful. The movement was elegant. The sequences were graceful. But more and more, I

became annoyed. Then I became angry, then afraid. All of this artistic skill and the large of amount of resources were poured into a show that had no substance. The aesthetic of the show was post-modern, a kind of hip kitsch. The movement, which I'm sure took a great amount of skill and training for the dancers to perform, seemed beyond what the audience member could fathom themselves doing. The movement/music combination was work done on the pulse, not the rhythm, a combination know to draw the audience into a trance. An ordinary veneer, a cool kitschy design, a lulling musical pattern, a high level of aesthetic skill with very little substance, a picture was beginning to emerge for me. This work was not like art, which one believes will impart some kind of insight to the spectator. This was work was like commercial advertising, stylish, aesthetically crafted, meant to lure you in, but with only the motivation of selling to offer the viewers.

I was disappointed and I was frightened. This is what the 'world's greatest American choreographer' offered to his audience. In this post-911 America, where messages about humanity and performances which suggest the subtle complexity of the human condition are so critically needed, this man gives us advertising. At the end of the show the audience roars with standing applause. I watch them, their performance is almost more important that the one that was on stage. The audience who applauds an artist who lulls them into the experience of empty beauty, don't get me wrong. I, myself, love beauty. But for me beauty has something behind it, something more.

I was discouraged, the connections between the form of high art and the politics of a nation has been discussed through many historical moments, by many scholars. In these wicked political times, if the art that the public is offered as great is aesthetically strong and at the same time devoid of substance, we are looking at some hard times, indeed.

At the concert talk back, I politely ask the choreographer about how the political environment has affected his work. I am greeted by a verbal tirade, an attack on my character and question

From this experience, I understand how the art of dance might work to inform and strengthen the disciplining process of the human mind/body by the social fabric. This kind of work maintains and strengthens the social's hold on the habitual patterns by which we train our somatic understandings, the understandings which help us to make our way through this world, on a felt level.

Part 2-Introduction

The remainder of this chapter introduces notions of the body as derived from the field of Somatics to ideas from universal ethics and other philosophies. Ideas of what the Soma is will be drawn from three somatic disciplines, Alexander Technique, Hakomi and Continuum Movement. The 'Soma', the human body understood as the mind/body complex is the focal point of this piece. The soma, for the past 100 years, has been explored through bodywork practices, psychology and philosophy. This discussion will present the field of somatics, as it moves through these different disciplines.

Writing this I become aware that somatics, based on the practice of the body/mind as one, blurs the distinctions of these genres. In a vision, where the mind/body is one, the practice, is the psychology, is the philosophy. These are holistic works (Kurtz), holding an integrity in deep structure that is unique to their ontological activity, because these works hold paramount the unity of the mind/body. This premise of somatics practices is posited against post-enlightenment rational thinking which hold the body and mind to be separate. In somatics practices you cannot do anything to your body, because in the doing, you are your body. A different concept of the self is upheld here, as well as a different notion of the other. Knowledge gleaned from the

ideas/practices of somatics lend themselves very well to notions of pre-theoretical beliefs and human protonorms. The realization of pre-theoretical beliefs, protonorms and what I would like to call possible universal human conditions, can change thought to the extent that we might have a whole different set of considerations to deal with in thinking of issues of human well-being in the social context. (Christians, Traber, 1997, 3-23)

As a structure to introduce somatics to philosophy and ethics, I will engage with the thought of communications ethicist, Clifford Christians, in his work of the Universal Value of the Primal Sacredness of Life (Christians, Traber, 1997, 3-23). It is my idea that the human soma organizes itself through a process that is based in loving attention. In the language of some of the major somatics practices this considered more directly, and in others this might be implied (Kurtz, 1990) (Conrad). In this paper I will, also, explain how love works as an organizing factor of the soma and how this might be considered a universal. Perhaps, this could be called the Universal Value of the primal nature of love as an organizing principle of human life. Also, in this paper I will explore the way in which insight gleaned from somatics practices can be used to illuminate Michel Foucault's work on the techne of the body. Somatics practices work, functioning as, both, a practice which can be a vehicle for the reorganizing of one's perceptive/felt sense being, where one can begin to enjoy greater choice (Hakomi)(Alexander Technique) in the felt sense ways of being; and at the same time, a practice where the reorganization of feeling, language, bodily sensation and perception is in cohesion with the way one finds himself in the world as a mover, ultimately effecting social interaction. In these ways many somatics practices can be understood through Foucault's concept of the techne of the body, and can be seen as a technology of the self, which might serve to reverse the social disciplining of the body, as a whole sensory mechanism. Finally, in this chapter I will show how this

viewpoint of somatic communication as culture can lean on the the profound work of Emmanuel Levinas for insight into, how as we might accept the other and ourselves, under the condition of the vulnerability of the ‘other’s naked face’(Levinas, Nemo), suggesting how we might find ourselves operating in a communication model which holds important the vulnerability of the non-socially signified, non-violent body as humanness. In this relational model of social interaction, the human landscape is seen through a lens that presents the process of a deeply interdependent model of communication as culture.

Here I would like to continue by presenting a clear definition of what I understand the soma to be, and how I understand it as operating, as we are, as human beings. The soma, is the bodily material which the human being is. The soma is emotion and does our thinking. As a somatic body, we move through spaces, making space, as we live them (Gendlin, *Process*). It is as the soma, a vibrating body, with five senses along with other sensory processes as one, that we navigate the world and make our most important choices and understandings. It is as the feeling (but not feeling, as in emotion, feeling, as felt sense) body that we know the world and live in it. Holding and touching to love, cringing as we anticipate another day of boredom, etc. Also, it is at the level of the soma, where social interaction and experienced is processed by the self, to form meaning and felt perception (Kurtz, 1990). It is at the level of the soma, through the processing of felt meaning, where the qualities of our relationships to others are formed, in and as the social/spacial matrix. Language, memory and taste are of the soma, as is discernment and reason, processes of the soma. The way that we perceive the world as we move through it, operates through the somatic process. In some somatics models, the nervous system, as it is known through the western model is responsible for the way the soma operates. Other somatics models dispute the way the western model of the nervous system is configured. In any case, in

most somatics paradigms, the soma is the self/body, which operates in space, understands life and relates, on a sensory bodily level. The somatic level is grand though, incorporating a process by which we know much of our world, and by which we sense its mystery.

Part 3-The Soma as a Protonorm

A version of the soma, as described above, is present in most of the somatics practices I will be discussing. Each practice, for has its own definitions and delineations of the somatic body, couched in the logic of its practice. Practitioners of somatics will argue that different parts of this definition does not suit her ideas of the work, but I believe in general, that the above definition is suitable for many somatic disciplines. In readying myself to make the argument that the above definition of the soma might be suitable for consideration as a protonorm, I would like to make the comment that I only believe this is so, as definitions would find them to be. I believe the condition exists for all humans, but would not be defined as such, unless one was looking in this direction for a definition.

There are three main arguments to use to support this idea of the soma as a protonorm. First and most simply, is that the somatics practices discussed in this paper, while having mainly been developed in the west, are effectively taught to people from cultures around the world. Some practices, like Hakomi, based on the Buddhist notion of mindfulness, are developed through parts of practices from the other parts of the globe. This in itself might be reason enough to understand the mind/body complex called the soma as a condition, which spans across cultures.

A second explanation, which may lend itself to the idea of the soma as a protonorm, is one rooted in the kind of empiricism by which somatics methods were developed. In both the cases of Continuum and Alexander Technique, practices which will be discussed in further detail

in this paper, the methods were developed by experiments which the developers made on themselves, then tried out on others. In the Alexander technique, FM Alexander's (founder of technique) experiments lead to a process which created a particular repeatable (but not exactly) result, and as for Continuum movement, Emilie Conrad's (founder of Continuum) experiments lead to entrances into different states of being, unique to the person who practiced them, but with results verifiable enough to be developed into a system (Conrad), both founder's experiments on themselves lead to practices which could be used by many other people. One could come to the conclusion that because these methods were developed through a kind of empirical activity, an activity which involves the definition of different kinds of experiential processes, that are repeatable, and in this sense verifiable, that the soma discovered in these experiments might be considered a protonorm, or a possible universal among people. Philosophers Eugene Gendlin and Donald Hanlon Johnson have devised a case for a first person science based on this model of verifiable experiential processes, that would be useful in this case.

Finally, I believe that love as a presence or condition can be an organizing principle of the soma. The work of Clifford Christians in the protonorm of the primal sacredness of human life (Christians, Traber, 1997, 12-15), has lead me in this direction. I would like to add to his list of human dignity, truth-telling and non-violence, as principles included in the idea of the universal reverence for life, that of love. Also, I would premise the active process of meaning making of the soma, as a protonorm. In somatics practices, I have found that love exists as a basic organizing factor in the somatics process, as practiced in certain modalities. In other modalities it is not so central, but it can be found as a primary function in the activity of relating through the process, which is a key ingredient in the bodywork practice.

For example, the psycho-physical practice of the Hakomi method, developed by psychologist Ron Kurtz uses mindful attention to begin to unravel in the client, matrices of meaning, emotion and the felt, in order to heal trauma. The client waits quietly, as does his guide, the therapist. Different linguistic or sensorial probes might be employed to evoke situations, meanings or feeling, to which the client will react in a somatically patterned way. As the counselor waits with the client and her information, in an accepting, non-judgmental, non-violent way (Kurtz, 1990), the client in his process of listening to himself in the same way-allows a matrix of meaning, sensation and event memory to unfold from the body. As certain memories, meanings or sensations occur, the client's way of relating to others and his environment changes. Habitual patterns from traumatic events unfold and dissipate, while new insights are had. These insights are had on the mind/body level. While new understandings occur, the client understands himself in space differently, consequently, changing the relationships that make up his reality. While Kurtz's vocabulary choice of accepting, non-judgmental and non-violent, do not necessarily equate to the meaning of love, I believe it does very much mean the active healing attitude of love. What is more remarkable is that the human body, when resting in the presence of love by another or itself, sets about on a process of its own to automatically heal from traumatic events which have blocked the way to relating through love. This appears to often be the case with this healing process, which the body takes on by its own accord. The result is to be able to love more fully or in a more healthy way. In my 12 years of practicing the Hakomi method, this is what I have found. It is as if the human soma, has a process which self-corrects when meanings about relationship, which have occurred through experience, point to a relational attitude which does not allow love.

Fascinating, is that one might understand Kurtz's model of the way experience impacts the soma, not only for traumatic events, but for the whole of the way experiential relating impacts the body to connect aesthetic and meaning in the formation of culture. As I believe this is so, could it be that as culture/language in the broadest sense of the word, occurs through experience in relationship. And as meaning forming through the soma happens, that the instinct is to constantly heal the places where the meaning and relationships formed are not of love, while expanding the healing creative potential of language at the same time? I like to believe this is true and certainly, if it were there would be more evidence to uphold Christian's protonorm of the sacred human.

Emilie Conrad, in her bodywork practice called Continuum, engages the presence of love more directly through her work. According to Conrad, the body is basically water, with chemical instruction as how to become form. Conrad's work involves bringing our bodies back from fixed rigidities of movement to a more wave like state. To Conrad we are meant to be fluidly connected to our environments, (Conrad). Conrad understands the material of the body to be pliable, that the forms humans take is designed by what is socially and environmentally necessary. For her, "beyond our cultural moorings," (Conrad), "in our cells, in our tissues, in the very throb of our existence (is) and underlying flow that urges, inspires, flares our nostrils and beats our hearts." (Conrad) The flow, Conrad refers to is love.

Conrad's work encourages a return to the flowing qualities of water. For her, at our biological core is the ability to innovate form. Conrad by enabling intrinsic movement (internal, felt-sense based movement), teaches people to create richer neurological possibilities for the body. For Conrad, the activity of the human nervous system is greatly influenced by the quality of a person in a culture's relationship to their environment and other people. For her, the

repetition involved in western mechanization has defined the way we relate to the world through our nervous system. A goal in Continuum movement is to become more ‘fluid and resonant’, the defensive structures placed on the nervous system, in order to survive in this environment disappearing, so that “a larger unity in which communication at the level of cells and fluids become enhanced.” (Shaffer)

Conrad’s claims might seem a bit far-out, but they are tenable considering the mystery of human nature. I have not had the opportunity to experience this work first hand, whereas with Alexander Technique and Hakomi, the other two somatic modalities discussed in this paper, I have had instruction and practice. I have added Conrad’s ideas to the repertoire of my own movement practice and found that, when practicing as Conrad suggests, my form is more mutable. Instructions given to my joints, defining my movement, changes into me into a different kind of mobility than I am normally used to. I have also worked with undulating movement in the water and experienced the dissolving of barriers, Conrad talks about.

Emilie Conrad’s work is known to facilitate increased movement in people paralyzed by spinal injury, stroke or polio (Shaffer 1). These people experience, “transformations in their bodies that medical doctors can only label as miraculous” (Shaffer 1). Conrad believes that this is possible through the body’s trust, which opens us to fluidity of our bodies, which is love. “Love,” she claims, “is as natural to us as breathing. It is the ocean in which we swim.” (Shaffer 2). A communication of love on a cellular level is the benchmark of Conrad’s early work with people with paralysis. While not gaining full movement recovery, many people with paralysis have gained much movement ability, after working with her. For Conrad, and those who practice Continuum, love is at the center of the organization of the human movement system. The results of Continuum, an experiential process which leads to higher awareness of love as it moves us, are

to some extent repeatable, and as there is a movement towards a first person science, would this empirical evidence be enough to consider love as protonorm for the organizing factor of our felt sense?

Part 4- Foucault, the Techne of the Body and Alexander, the Use of the Self

In interview, Michel Foucault (Foucault and Rabinow 340-371) discusses the technology of the self in the Greek and Christian concept of living well. I understand Foucault's definition of techne of the self, as the way one enacts oneself in relation to or through social or environmental conditions. Foucault's work goes into detail exploring how cultures teach or train one's body, to conduct relationships to oneself, others and the environment in order to create a reality. One way human reality is created is through the way relationality functions upon the body, training our perceptions, encouraging certain qualities of relationship over others. There is a disciplining and a creative aspect of this. Foucault states, "we should not have to refer the creative activity of somebody to the kind of relations he has to himself, but should relate the kind of relations one has to oneself to a creative activity." (Foucault and Rabinow 351).

This kind of thought places my above observations about somatics onto a different plateau; for not only does the practice of somatics have implications on the personal level but now we might begin to see how the somatic identity might operate on a social level, bringing us together in cultural meaning.

Foucault's ideas of the techne of the self can be understood in parallel to the model of the soma as understood through Hakomi. In the Hakomi model, experience impacts the soma on many levels- the felt, the emotional, the meaningful, the spatial, as it is all one, implicating the way in which experience will be organized in the future for a person. If we can understand this as the way that cultural meaning, both spatial and linguistic is processed by the soma, this might

serve to bring Foucault's ideas into a somatic discussion. Through a concept of the *techne* of the self, it could be understood that the way by which the self is artfully constructed, serves to create culture as it is conceived in relationship. In the example of Hakomi, we can understand the process by which the meaning making process of the body, the physical felt sense perception mechanism, is artfully constructed, through organizing experience, allowing one to participate in cultural communication. As this cultural meaning is transmitted from soma to soma, and environment to soma, or soma to environment, a communicative relational model of culture can be imagined. Both Foucault's model of *techne* of the self, and the Hakomi model of somatic psychology, point to the way cultural communication as relationality occurs at the level of creativity of the somatic self. Both point to a way that this creates cultural meaning.

While Hakomi works with this mainly, in terms of soma and trauma, philosopher Eugene Gendlin, founder of the experimental psychology called Focusing, works with this at the level of processing thought, which is beyond language. In his 'Thinking at the Edge Process' (TAE), Gendlin teaches us how to have thought which the already established social meanings of the language will not support. This is done by returning to the felt sense, to allow ideas and sensation emerge, and by that redefining language, through a new way of using language in combinations, which support the new paradigm one has discovered. Here we can see how the way in which one relates to oneself creatively can function, either through the healing of traumatic events or the redefining of language. Certainly with results that change the social and cultural fabric, if it is understood that these factors operate relationally, as Foucault's *techne* of the self is extended to the holistic body.

Both habit and the nervous system of the body are implicated in the above discussion. If we choose to think about the nervous system, as it is conceptualized in the western model, one

might understand that these holistic felt-sense meaning constructions occur through a habitual patterning of the nervous system, and then a systematic or an organic change to the pattern. This is what I believe Continuum founder, Conrad means when she talks about the, ‘defensive structures of the nervous system’ (Shaffer), which are developed on the nervous system in order to survive in the social and physical environment. While Conrad’s ideas about habitual patterns of the nervous system lends its self to notions of the way we are constituted as human beings in the physical form, the ideas that Gendlin and the Hakomi system present are more about cultural and personal meaning. As experience impacts the soma, cultural meaning is performed through the way one understand her relationship to the world. This happens on the sensory level, which involves the patterning of the nervous system. Re-patterning occurs when listening to the felt sense in an accepting, non-judgemental, non-violent way, (note here the ability of love to transform meaning).

The Alexander Technique, a psycho-physical bodywork modality, developed by Australian F.M. Alexander at the turn of the 19th century, is a somatic practice which works through changing a person’s habitual movement patterns. Through guidance and direction of the body as it is in movement, the Alexander teacher informs the student, through her hands on how to change these habitual patterns. The teacher receives information about the student’s patterns, by listening with her hands and watching the students as she responds to her directions. The goal of this work, while approached indirectly, is to remind the student about the most efficient way of moving. This efficiency is understood through the use of a number of reflexes in the body. As the student learns to activate these reflex patterns while moving, through feedback from the teacher’s hands, the student’s body moves in a more graceful and poised manner. The teacher guides the student into using these naturally developing reflexes to guide the bulk of their

movement. Through this guidance into the most efficient use of the body, the student begins to use this way of moving as opposed to their habitual way of moving. The use of the reflexes keeps the nervous system from growing into habitual patterns. It keeps the nervous system fresh and alive, constantly recalibrating for each moment. As one is taught to make movement without disrupting the reflex activity, there is a sense of well being and grace attained.

In Alexander Technique, habitual movement and thought patterns are what create responses which are disruptive to the poised use of the soma (body/mind/self), a use of the soma where its reflexes are in best working order. In the technique it is not often discussed what are the causes of poor use patterns. Mostly attention is given to replacing habitual patterns of movement, with ones that allow growth. One thing that is certain though is that habit, as termed by those who practice the technique, grows out of an ingrained pattern of responding to the environment, either physical or emotional. The fixed patterns by which one relates to the environment is implicated in the creation of habitual movement, each perpetuating the other. This affects the way one understands the world through proprioception. One's relationship to the environment is implied in the creation of cultural meaning. Here once again we see the possibility of the use of the nervous system in creating fixed cultural meaning.

An example of this might be found in the discussion of the physical fright/flight response. The fright/flight response, in muscular terms involves the jutting of the head forward and a tightening of certain back muscles. This is part of the physical response of fear. People will get stuck in this response. I know that my own patterning is this way. By using Alexander's directions of primary control, that the neck and back be long, wide and free and the head directing up, the flight/fright pattern might correct itself. The regaining of poise, that the body would be able to enjoy full use of the reflexes for efficient movement stops patterned movement from returning.

In Alexander technique, the process of changing of habit which interferes with poised use, is taught to the student, so that they have the ability to make the adjustments necessary. These adjustments are not only physical, but mental (Carrington, 1994). Through thought, one can direct oneself into a state of poise or good use. Alexander terms this ability to interfere with the nervous systems patterns, through proper conceptualizing of the reflex pattern, “Use of the Self”. In Alexander’s estimation each one of us has indirect access to the workings of her nervous system, through the principles of good use, that might be practiced by “Use of the Self”. While the soma’s meaning making process is not understood directly through Alexander’s work, habitual thought patterns are changed, as one breaks habitual movement patterns. Thought and movement are seamlessly interwoven in the technique.

In my own years of experience with the Alexander technique, I have found that as my movement becomes more responsive to the people, situations, environments, and my own states of the moment, less of habit, so does the way that I understand the world.. This has left me living in relationship to others and my environment, in a way where I experience much more choice of response and interaction, than before. I find myself not so involved in the meanings which appear imposed by the environment, situations and other people. I more easily choose to make sense of the world, in the way that I see fit, in the kinds of relationship, which I choose. I believe Alexander’s notion of the ‘use of the self’ and Foucault’s idea of the ‘techne’ of the self have direct correlation to one another. Both discussing the creative power of one’s relationship to oneself, and how this effects the relationship one has to their environment, and other within it.

Part 5-Somatics, Buber, Levinas and a Communicative, Relational Model of Culture

In the final part of this chapter, I will discuss how somatics principles can be viewed in the larger context of culture as it is created through relational communication. While this chapter, to some extent, has already touched on this subject the focus has been until now on the principle of somatics it creates meaning on the personal level. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to how the meaning making process of the Soma is active in culture, as culture is constructed through relationality. For this we will look at the work of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, along with implications from somatics practices-Alexander Technique, Hakomi, and Continuum.

While there are many approaches to a communications based model of culture, the one that interests me most is based on the way that quality of relationship, implies culture. I believe that the world exists on many levels and culture teaches, trains or enables us to interact with our world in a particular way, designed through meaning. Culture affects the way we name things and use things in our world. It affects the way we understand ourselves and one another, the way we know how things work. I believe this happens through the qualities of relationships we have. Martin Buber states at the beginning of “I and Thou,”

The world is twofold for man in accordance with his twofold attitude.

The attitude of man is twofold in accordance with the two basic words he can speak.

The basic words are not single words but word pairs.

One basic word is the word pair I-You.

The other basic word is the word pair I-it; but this basic word is not changed when He or She takes the place of It.

Thus the I of man is also twofold.

For the I of the basic word I-You is different from that in the basic word I-It.

Basic words do not state something that might exist outside them; by being spoken they establish a mode of existence.

Basic words are spoken with one's being.

When one says You, the I of the word pair I-It is said, too.

The basic word I-You can only be spoken with one's whole being.

The basic word I-It can never be spoken with one's whole being. (Buber 54)

We know ourselves and one another by the way that we understand and name. That the way we know the other, is the way that we know our self. But more, deeply, is that to call the other by the name you, is to speak to them directly, to their humanity. You is different than he, she, or it. It is with the depth of our heart, which we speak to one who is named you. It is with regards to social order with which we speak to he, she or it. It is behind them, not to them. This knowing is all by the quality of relationship, through quality of relationship, one becomes it, he, or she, one becomes I and thou. Foucault defines ethics as the way one relates to oneself (Foucault and Rabinow, date), the techne of the self is drawn from this idea. As one relates to the self, one brings the qualities from this relationship into the world and vice versa. The ethics of Emmanuel Levinas concerns itself with the way one relates to the 'other'. Levinas talks about the vulnerability of the face of the other.

“There is first, the very uprightness of the face, its upright exposure, without defense. The skin of the face is that which stays the most naked, most destitute. It is the most naked, though with a decent nudity”(Levinas and Nemo 86)

Levinas describes the I and thou relationship, through the face to face vulnerability of human relationship. The very uprightness of this face, as we meet it, face to vulnerable face, as it can do nothing to mask its meaning from the soul, its softness, its need. This is the human 'other' which is not characterized by her social role, or character, only the complex bareness of her vulnerability.

It is this naked face which masks its "poverty by putting on poses." (Levinas and Nemo, 86). It is this naked face of the other, signified, without the otherings societal character that Levinas believes forbids us to kill. It is the acknowledgement of the basic humanity of the other, which forbids us to kill. Is it the structures of meaning that we draw around ourselves, to characterize one another, which allows one to hate? Is it a function of the habitual pattern of the nervous system, which does not allow one to know beyond their hatred? To not reach into one's own love? Does the I of the I-it, make the kind of relationality, which allows us to forget the vulnerability and basic humanity of the other?

The non-socially signified face of the other is, "what cannot become a content, which your thought would embrace; it is uncontainable, it leads you beyond" (Levinas and Nemo, 87) Levinas points here to the other, the other human, as one which we may know out of the relationship of othering social context. There is a way to know one another within othering social context, and a way to know one another without othering social context.

Levinas' ideas of the face within and without othering social context, work well within the framework of thought which make up Conrad's notion of the body in the Continuum practice. The body can be understood through the socially bound nervous system, which survival through social convention requires, or the body freed into possibility. One allows for the

communication of love in stronger way than the other. It is as if we look to the other with socially constructed need, we see the it of I-it, and if we simply look into the face of the other, we see the thou, of I thou. With regards to the Continuum's notion of the somatic body, the somatic configured through the I-it relationship of a structure necessary for survival within a certain socially structured environment, within a certain need, defines space and relationship differently, than a soma which exists in love.

There are two correlates for this, within the system of the Alexander technique. One is that the nervous system and its reflexes develop in a child according to the subject/object relationship the body/mind has within its environment. Change the environment, and perhaps the body would develop in another way. The other is that in the Alexander technique, we are taught to not end-gain. End-gaining is the process of moving for the sake of the thing you will get at the end of your movement, movement for function. As you move for the sake of movement, as you exist, still doing your tasks what ever they are, habits are released. There is something about the way we know things as we purposefully reach for them, which traps the perceptive system in social patterns of habit.

These examples point out that beyond the social, or alongside the social there is the human, vulnerable, in our humanity. That there are these different ways of being together, always possible. Levinas' face of the other is also reflected in the Hakomi body-the body, that through the impact of experience organizes space into habitual cultural meaning-the body that holds this cultural meaning, until it has shed the impact of the experience to start fresh. When one looks at the naked vulnerable face of the other, the face which in Levinas' words is 'beyond knowing', one looks at the other before she is marked by the habitual cultural knowing of others. I believe that, as one looks at the other in a way that is 'beyond knowing', one also, has the

chance to look at themselves in this way. As quoted above, “When one says you, the I of the word pair I-You is said, too.” (Buber 54) As the Hakomi process works to remove habitual somatic patterns of knowing both the seer and the seen are free from stereotypical knowledge of themselves and each other. This is the power of the I-Thou relationship.

Relationally, Levinas asks us to be of service to the other. Buber states that the relationship to the other, equals the relationship to oneself. Foucault states that relationship to oneself is ethics. I believe that ones relationship to oneself reflects one’s relationship to the other. If ethics were the relationship to one’s self and the other, and this constitutes the techne of the self, so that the way one understood oneself and the other in relationship, created conditions in the world, would we not have a world that is made and understood through somatic understanding as posited by the Hakomi method? What kind of a world would it be if it were one where the human self was understood through the method of the Continuum practice? And what if Levinas’ idea of service to the vulnerable face of the other, applied also to being in service to the vulnerable face of the self, would this be the same as Alexander’s use of the self? To care for the self which is not a part of the habits which come through social signification, the part of the self, which exists ‘beyond knowing’.

In relationship, we exist together, as creatures signified by social roles, which we give ourselves or one another, or as creatures of the naked vulnerable face of the other or of the self, beyond social signification, or as creatures of the myriad of combinations which exist between these two. As we might recognize each other in one manner, we might recognize each other in another. In this way we live with each other through and beyond fixed cultural meaning.

Interesting, that in the Alexander techniques, the teacher, the one who gives the lesson, transmits the feeling of poise to her student through her hands, while understanding the feeling of

poise for herself from the feedback she receives from the careful, unconditional, listening to the body of the student. Once the cycle begins, the two bodies tune themselves up together. The student understands her sense of poise through the teacher's sense of poise, the teacher understands her sense of poise through the student's. Could this be like the kind of relationship one would have if two people looked into each other's faces, with the gaze of looking at the face of the vulnerable other?

One Final Aside

Recently, I met a qualitative researcher, who worked with the language of propaganda and its operational process in warfare. He himself had been in the army. I talked with him about the body training of army people. He said, "Well they have us marching our feet into the ground for hours. Each step of the march sends our feet smack into the ground, creating a shock wave up the spine and into the brain cavity.

It seems to make sense to walk softly on the earth, doesn't it.

Chapter Eight: Dissertation Conclusion

An opportunity to envision culture as affect and presence has been afforded in this dissertation. Here I would like to propose that we look at the film director's craft or the qualities of music for more clues about how to describe the world we live in. The film director encourages the presence of the actor in a certain way and calls forth in scenery and the qualities of presence of the actor as character, a style. A multi-faceted sensory style. How the camera is used, what kind of light is envisioned, what the qualities are of human being as they interact, together or separate, what the world sounds like, how the sounds matter. How a touch is about to happen. How the air touches the skin of each character. How it is felt by each one of them. Then uses the shapes, starts and stops of the this style to tell a story. Qualities of lighting, choice of props, actor's aptitude tell the story, words like pace, rhythm, speed, light can be used. Words and concepts to describe this are not so easily found. Choreographer Rudolph Laban uses scales described as, from free to bound, sustained to sudden, light to strong and direct to indirect to describe this (Bartenieff, 1980, p 225). He has also devised a way of mapping movement including qualities of movement/presence. Words from music can be used, flurry, fast, rest, play, chord, grace, gentle, melody, build, bass, warm, sweet, blast, tune, fill, full, alto, minor, color, flat, violent, beautiful, timbre. It is a concept of culture that can be built on verbs, adjectives and adverbs. This kind of knowing and expressing, is often overlooked by cultural studies practitioners as they comb through the human expressive world for clues about how things operate. Yet, it so important. That how it was a good day though bad things happened or how it was a bad day though good things happened come partially from this. This is, how we feel it and how we play it. This is the way that we improvise, most often off of scripts, our world. It becomes part of

what possibilities are available to us. How we understand and carry out, certain layers of certain options. It is about how we find each other.

On the floor of my apartment, which is my office, I have had, through out the writing of this dissertation, many objects, including big piles of paper and books, lots of books. Among these objects, rhinestone barettes, an old school tape recorder, bottles of essential oils for mixing, a tambourine, a big bag of rubber bands, painted peace signs, lace shawls, a set of brand new drum sticks, sparkly bangle bracelets, are two objects that I have kept to remind me of what goes in the conclusion. One is a box of, “magnetic poetry kit, music lover” magnets, which the music words in the above paragraph are taken from, I just opened the box for the first time today. The other is a small, size of the palm of your hand music box. It is a clear box, that shows the inside workings of a music box. It has a cylinder with thorn like metal spikes sticking out of it. When you turn the music box’s small crank, the cylinder turns, and as it turns, the thorns hits the tiny different length strips of metal, and from this a melody emerges. The speed of your hand, basically the speed of your whole body, and way you weight your hand as you turn the crank determines the quality of the melody, or if you can get one at all (it is a very delicate little box). The melody this box plays is ‘somewhere over the rainbow,’ Which depending on who you are, can be so evocative. This little tune from this tiny box held in the palm of your hand, moved by the other hand, just right, can change a moment so. For me, this little box, explained so much about what I am trying to talk about in this dissertation. That flicker in an eye, that way that something is moved, can mean so much, and comes from the quality that our bodies conduct. It is part of understanding and communicating.

These days, as global capitalism has met its logical conclusion and turns around to devour itself, the resources behind the structures that govern us diminish or become highly operative.

Certainly, these are hyperbolic statements, but if money was not pumped into the system of US capitalism, the whole thing might have collapsed. Leaving us with only each other. As this happens, program code, ie, how this computer program I am using for writing right now works, and the internet, guides our attention and awareness in certain ways, and the timbres of our consciousness are influenced. The ways that our attention operates is influenced. Research in somatics speaks to this and is a part of this age.

Embodied, we are tuned to the world and each other through culture. The power we have to evoke together is great. It is in the way that a single tamborine player can set an outdoor market place alight with energy. The sound of a voice can bring us to tear or lift us to joy. Footsteps can evoke terror or comfort. Certainly, in the presence of one another, or evoking presence alone, we provide the direction of our own being. Being together is a language of its own. The ways that we are with each other, in so many ways allow for the possibilities we have, together. Not simply how we sense, but how the sensory is apprehended makes culture and hence, make cultural possibility.

Parts of the world, including the United State, have hit a rough patch. The clutches of economic empire have sucked the life's blood out of our work and possibilities. What is the way out? certainly, awareness, certainly banding together. It is clear to me that new kinds of solutions, different kinds of voices, and different kinds of speaking, living, activities and movements are needed. How will we find this? Perhaps, we need to stay together and let it emerge.

Appendix: Embodied Knowledge and the Study of Culture

“...corporeal play (that) is vital to cultural production and to theoretical formulations of cultural process. Talk about the body has become really real. Surely it was always everywhere, but now it moves in intellectual circles....Bodies moving about. Thinking, writing, speaking is now more fully inflected with this corporeality. But how to know this? To have knowledge of it? The fragile suspension bridge that once seemed the lone crossing between mind and body now appears as a super-highway, it is by this design that the traffic flows. Inscription is motion. (Foster, 1996, xi).

Writer, Jane Desmond, speaks of dance and culture in her book, “Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance” :

Looking at dance demands that we begin to find ways to talk about proprioception, sensation, emotion and expressivity which lapse neither into the pretended objectivity of scientism nor the transcendent figurations of a unified ‘self’. It demands that we theorize the relationships between the public display of bodily motion and the articulation of social categories of identity, of their transmission, transformation, perception, and enactment. (Desmond, p 3, 1997)

Desmond asks,

What is kinesthetic subjectivity?

How does it shape and get shaped by other social formations of the self, and of communities?

(Desmond, pg 2, 1997)

Because I am primarily interested in the ways that bodily process invent culture and the kinds of possibilities for agency that this positions I add to this list these questions of my own,

How does the body interpret the world and language?

- 1) How does the body make language and space?
- 2) How is the way the body makes language connected to sensation and proprioception?
How does this process effect presence, perception and meaning?
- 3) How does the ways that different cultures teach us to approach space in different ways, part of a language that we communicate in?
- 4) How is this way that we communicate in space trained so that we live the oppressions that social hierarchies would profit from?
- 5) And what about improvisation?

Michel de Certeau (DeCerteau, 1984) addresses similar questions in his analysis of the modern city and the ways that the practice of everyday life makes meaning in spaces which architecturally would seem to fix or ask that we understand our live through a particular hierarchy of meanings. The modern city has been understood by critics as a place where architecture and city design dictate much of the ways activities are carried out. But DeCerteau posits that the practices of everyday life, or the ways that we live our everyday lives remake the ways that the cities would allow us to make meaning and activity in our lives.

First, if it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (e.g. by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g. by a wall that prevents one from going further), then

the walker actualizes these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements. (DeCerteau, 1984)

Michel Foucault writes about the way society trains the body for participation in culture. He compares descriptions of early 17th century soldiers to description of a late 18th century soldiers. The bodies of the soldiers, their character, strengths and stances changed as their role as fighters did, and as the conceptualization of fighting did, as concepts of states did.

Of the early 17th century soldiers he explains,

“...the soldier was someone who could be recognized from afar; he bore certain signs: the natural signs of his strength and his courage, the marks, to of his pride; his body was the blazon of his strength and valor; and although it is true that he had to learn the profession of arms little by little/ generally in actual fighting/movements like marching and attitudes like the bearing of the head along for the most part to a bodily rhetoric of honor,” (Foucault, 1984, pg 179).

Of the late eighteenth century soldiers he explain,

“By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit,” (Foucault, 1984, 179).

The way bodies are change according to what is expected of them by the culture, in the way practice occurs.

For Foucault, it is partially a matter of ethics, which he defines as,

“ And there is another side to the moral prescriptions, which most of the time is not isolated as such but is, I think, very important: the kind of relationship you outta have with yourself, rapport a soi, which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions,” (Foucault, 1984, 352).

Foucault's observations leads one to see that the way that one understands and lives as themselves, is through the meaning that one's relationship has with themselves.

According to Foucault, it is in relationship, through an ethic that one generates ones concept of self and when the state or a dominant culture is involved in creating this ethic, the way one conceptualizes one's life and self through their body is disciplined. The way ones body becomes is part of this, as one relates to oneself through the aesthetic of the time, and hence, embody who they are.

The above ideas of Foucault are important in understanding the way society and culture influences the ways that we know ourselves and others as bodies. The ways that society and culture effects the ways that we interact with our environments as bodies and ultimately, the way that we make our world with others, as bodies.

Anthropologist Edward Hall 's book “The Hidden Dimension” (Hall, 1992) illustrates the practice of space making among human beings. His observations illuminate a world of sensory communications which occur among people in cultural groups. This sensory communication occurs in the ways that we take space together and what this communicates in groups. For him this sensory communication is likened to a language and his estimation, language is a major

component in the way that thought is formed. For Hall the way we take up space and make space creates our sensory input, our perception, in the same way that language enables our thoughts.

“...how people from different cultures not only speak different languages but, what is possibly more important, inhabit different sensory worlds. Selective screening of sensory data admits some things while filtering out others, so that experience as it is perceived through one set of culturally patterned sensory screens is quite different from experience perceived through another. The architectural and urban environments that people create are expressions of this filtering/screening process. In fact, from these man-altered environments, it is possible to learn how different people use their senses,” (Hall, 1969, pg2).

Brian Massumi conceptualizes the body, so that we can start to conceptualize a notion of culture built on embodiment,

“When I think of my body, and ask what it does to earn that name, things stand out. It moves. It feels. In fact, it does both at the same time. It moves as it feels, and it feels itself moving,” (Massumi, 2002, pg 1).

He approaches the subject of embodiment and cultural practice,

Human beings are always in motion. From the level of our heartbeats and the blood moving through our veins, to the flying through the air we do in airplanes, cars or when snowboarding, human beings are in motion. An interactional analysis of practice begins to scratch the surface of what this implies, but still there are many questions yet to be answered. (Massumi, 2001, pg 2)

Bringing notions of embodiment to cultural practice, I believe that people who live in different cultures and subcultures have a language, that is of the bodies way of perceiving and being present, this language is the language of the way one enters space (Harewood, conversation, cite), and that we communicate with each other in this language and that we know ourselves through it. We communicate in the way that we presence ourselves and we know ourselves in the ways that we perceive. This language is an important component of the way that we make culture in relationship through communication. This language is constantly being changed as we live and experience. This language is different than one that would be understood in discrete semiotic units, it is similar to what Hall (Hall) posits, a language located in qualities of being. I think that the discursive power of this language is as powerful if not more than spoken or written language because it involves more clearly the whole body sensory system. We are in motion and we communicate through motion and qualities of motion. It is not gesture that I am talking about here, rather quality of presence, and, in some ways, these estimations of quality can be likened to character.

This language is tailored by each person as it is themselves, and that the possibility for meaning paradigm shifts in this language are very large. Though meaning in this language system might be defined somewhat differently. I am curious about what improvisation (in all forms) and music (in all forms) have to do with this language by which we enter space. I am also curious about the ways that cultural hybridity and translation figure into this language of the way that we enter space in everyday practice.

How might we resist the disciplining of the body, the embodied ways of knowing that are socially and culturally imposed in a negative way, through this language, but even more than

this, how we might resist all kinds of cultural oppressions that occur through discursive practice, through accessing and understanding embodied ways of knowing.

To this end, I believe that practices and studies in somatics and some understandings in dance and acting method are beneficial. A part of my larger project involves the development of an improvisational movement methodology based in my explorations, in order to uncover and generate knowledge about this language by which we enter space. What I am thinking of is whole body quality full body ways of being. A wholistic language of presencing and perceiving, that is of the self, that is knowing in constant motion, and is part a way of being.

Models of the Body

Many somatics and dance methods work from a conceptualization of the body which is created through experimentation . So, here I will be dealing with not only exploring the meaning making material of the body through a variety of methods, but as the body, as these variety of method have come to understand them. Some of these methods, such as Breema and Jin Shin Jyutsu are very old and do not include a biological model of the body in its conceptualization, though the actions of some of these models have biological explanations. Some of these models, such as the Alexander Technique have been disrupted by scientists in its earlier inceptions, and have been expanded through biological knowledge in recent days And some of these models, such as Emilie Conrad's 'Continuum ' view biological models of the body as only one explanation of many, and have created results that defy medical knowledge (Conrad, date unknown). What is sure among these methods and knowledges is that they are effective and constantly being expanded, as people continue to explore the possibilities.

The concepts of body which somatics practices work from are vast and varied, they go from conceptualizations which configure the body, as one whose characteristics are completely conducted by the qualities of “Life on Earth” (Conrad, date unknown),

Watching newborns, I was aware of how fluid their movements were, and how miraculous the process is as they interact with the earth. The earth creates the need for bones and muscles to stabilize our fluidity, so that we can crawl, rise and walk toward our unknown futures. I began to see that what we were referring to as a ‘body’ was a multiplicity of movements that were stabilizing in order to function and survive successfully within the earth’s atmosphere.

(Conrad, date unknown, Pg 31)

to body conceptualizations which envision the body as something peacefully and comfortably connected to the power of the Universe through consciousness, as all thing in the universe are, as does the ancient bodywork modality called Breema does,

The body is a living dynamic phenomenon which is constantly changing, an energy system connected to all levels of Existence.(Schreiber, 1998)

These conceptualizations of the body which the bodyworks stem from have sometimes started with characteristics understood from experiential explorations and extend into scientific understandings, such as Alex Murray’s innovations on the Alexander technique were and expanded exploration of the nervous systems through dermatomes has lead to innovations in practice.

Finally, there are those practices, such as the dance/body movement practice called Contact Improvisatio in which the body is just what each person who practices it conceptualizes it as, nothing more, nothing less and in constant exploration.

Need a new title or link

Somatics and Cultural Character

The body moves through space and acts with a kinesthetic intelligence. (Chatterjea, 2004) Each person develops their own, and in social and cultural groups there are languages by which we communicate with one another that the kinesthetic intelligence develops itself through. This language is taught to us by the what the environment of the earth requires from us for life, by our interactions with other people since birth, by the kind of work we do, by religious and eating practices, and by city design, music, architecture and dance, among other things. This language is generative and creative. If someone it is awake within it, they can compound the possibilities of the discursive field of this language daily.

If one understands the significance of the ways these languages become part of the lexicon of the way each person inhabits space, lives their lives, one can see the importance of technics which give us more agency in the discursive capabilities of these languages. A wonderful example is one that I have had on the contact improvisation floor with Kirstie Simson. The atmosphere that is created in Kirstie's class is free and unconditional. Here we worked together in contact to shift ourselves out of those ways that we are taught to approach each other. In class Kirstie says something like, 'We get close to each other, and touch each other in certain ways that in the society, we are not able to do'. I have found the touch in contact to be intelligent, respectful, loving, playful and safe. On the floor we wrestle and touch, explore each other with our feet. We envelope one another in our bodies entirely, during after class cool downs. We climb on each other's backs. These things are all done without the same kinds of meanings that they normally hold, and this play creates all kinds of possibility for everyday meaning.

Culture, Character, Presence, and the Material of the Body

There are two models which I would like to use to explain the way that the body makes meaning in space. One is through a concept of character and character armoring, the concept of character coming from ideas of modern method acting and the idea of character armoring coming from the Lowen/Reichian school of psychology which was an early somatic psychology. The other model is from the observations of Laban/Bartenieff about the Inner Connectivity/Outer Expressivity, internal perception and external presencing physical systems that Peggy Hackney lays out in her book, “Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals.”

Somatic psychologists work through a model that implies that knowing happens through the body in a matrix of sensation, thoughts, feelings and proprioception (Gendlin , 1981) (Kurtz, 1997), both the model of character armouring and the Laban/Bartenieff model of Inner Connectivity/Outer Expressivity fall into an understanding of human knowledge within this matrix. If we understand this model of human knowing to be part of the way we make culture through communication, an entirely new field of discourse opens up to us. This discourse is built on the way that human beings make knowledge through the process of the material of the body. Method acting pioneer Stella Adler makes the connection between character and relationship. In this case it is about a character and her relationship to an object but this can be related to a character and her personal relationship to objects , people, and all other things in the world.

“Acting is not an abstract activity. The actor must make everything he deals with real. If I have a chair on stage with me, that chair must become the focus of my attention so that it’s not just an abstract object. It’s an object with which I have some relationship.

Adler then goes on to say,

“As for the chair in my hand, I know the precise shade of brown it is. I know every knick on it’s back. I know where the paint has come off. I know where the string are pushing through the upholstery. I know if the legs are wobbly or if the arms need to be fixed. I also know what the chair demands of me, whether it makes me sit up straight, or whether it allows me to slouch. If is sit in a beach chair, how long does it take me to respond to the truth of where I am,” (Adler, 2000, pg 35).

Each person lives in relationship to her world. The way a person creates qualities of these relationships can manifest as character. Somatic psychologists and practitioners often talk about character armoring. This is the way past experiences has impacted a body and shaped the person’s perceptions. Often character armoring manifests itself as energetic blocks or stiff or too loose muscle clusters. Sometimes character armoring manifests itself as parts of the body which have deadened sensation or a limpness. Sometimes it is manifested as rigidity or a habitual way of holding the head (Keleman, 1986). The character armoring, however it manifests itself is sometimes reflective of a way a person’s language of entering space has become disciplined negatively as opposed to keeping its open generative qualities.

Often this character armoring offers one a habitual feedback of sensation, thought, and feeling in its proprioceptive manifestation, instead of an agentic menu of choices of how to approach the world. As one works to make their language of entering space a more generative less habitual one, the layers of character armoring starts to free up, as one works to free up the layers of their character armoring, their language of entering space becomes a less habitual one. The way one knows oneself in space changes. (this is not always true though)

This example of Emilie Conrad, founder of Continuum describes this experience, as she found it through breath,

“From my shoulders to my knees was a zone of protection. My cut stomach muscles lay cold and immobilized. I gave the impression of being alive but winter had spread its snowy stillness until I was completely frozen; my eyeballs, my toes, my heart-nothing left but icy vigilance,” (Conrad, date unknown, pg 60).

“I explored breath as a musician would experience with music. Movement became the outcome of my breath. I could tell, as I slowly began to sense more distinctly that if I changed the textures of my breath, I could bring about deeper sensation. It was as if the shifting of breath magnified occurrences that usually lay beneath the threshold of my awareness. The stimulation of dramatically shifting my breath brought me closer to experiencing internal movements. The more I could feel, the deeper inside myself I could be. Sensation was a textured pallet of many qualities, not imbued with any content,” (Conrad, date unknown, pg 63).

“Gradually, slowly, incrementally, more movement occurred. Attentive to breathing day after day, I could feel the snow turn to liquid, As I softened, I began to be filled with the most astonishing sensations. Like whispers the tones of these sensations were settled and permeating. Further and further, I could go, feeling myself as a wave joining a multiplicity of waves-multidirectional-some tiny, some barely a ripple, some stronger, more determined,” (Conrad, date unknown, pg 63).

The Laban/Bartenieff principle of Inner Connectivity/Outer Expressivity can be considered in the understanding of the ways a person's movement facilitates their way of being, and the way a person's way of being is reflected in their movement.

From Peggy Hackney's book, "Making Connections,"

Inner impulses are reflected in outer form. Involvement in the outer world in turn influences the inner. In short, Outer reflects inner. Inner reflects outer. Movement is meaningful.

(Hackney, 2000, p. 44)

Hackney's explanation of the Laban/Bartenieff system includes the notion that there are certain qualities of movement that are available to human beings in everyday interaction, and as human beings are enabled to inhabit a larger vocabulary of qualities of movement, their psychophysical expressive capacities are enhanced thus expanding the ways they can be in time and space.

Quality of movement are separated into Space, Weight, Time and Flow (Bartenieff, 1980, p 53), in the Laban/Bartenieff system this is referred to as Effort. The Laban/Bartenieff system works with characteristics of Effort, characteristics of what is referred to by the system as Quality, the idea of 'carving shapes in space' and developmental sequence repatterning exercises to expand the expressive possibilities of the body in space. As movement reflects the inner impulses of a person, how one knows oneself in space can be changed by expanding the movement repertoire of a person. As there are more possibilities for movement, more possibilities for psychophysical being and expression.

There are many ways that the psychophysical matrix is configured in somatics practices and somatic's literature. Besides for all that has been mentioned above there are practices which are built on Japanese medicine energy mapping of the body and its connection to personality and

emotion (Burmeister, 1997). Also, there are physical practices which understand the importance of the psoas muscle as a site where the effects of physical and emotional are stored (Koch, 1997) (Berceli, 2005). Most of these practices change the way one relates to the world as a body. It changes our psychophysical character. On a larger level, an understanding of the ways the body as material is involved in issues of communication through relationship and meaning making can help us to draw a broader picture of how culture operates.

psychologists have developed psychological practices in which the client listens to sensation as it unfolds into image, words and emotion. Often, this process leads to a memory and a moment is reached when the client can sense a time in their history when a certain occurrence built a way of viewing the world onto them. This way of viewing the world can be thought of as a development in the language of a person's way of entering space, because, often what happens is that from then on certain situations will be interpreted and acted upon by the person in a way that has overtones from the particular occurrence. This philosophy is at the basis of some mindfulness practices, as well. I believe that to some extent every situation and environment we live through acts on us in this way, somehow informing the language each person has as she enters space. Space, place, environments, situations and relationships are read by people in a whole body way as we move, and we respond. We have a knowledge that is in our moving, it is a combination of thoughts, feelings, sensation and awareness, and this knowledge is constantly building.

This way of knowing is a part of us, as we live lives embodied. The research and practices of somatic psychologists, help us to possibly understand the ways that the language of entering space is developed through the body. If it is possible to understand how some of this works, it is

then possible to make more of the ways that this language operates generative, as opposed to disciplining in a negative way. This is why I begin my movement meditation practice by moving through listening to sensation, as the movement unfolds. As the sensation moves me, I have images, thoughts and feelings, I can connect them to the various way that I move through my life. Language on my body shifts, the static patterns by which I perceive my environment start to melt away. I experiment with different ways of moving as an answer to my habits, the habits that have limited me. Ones which either because of the ways the society has coerced me into thinking about myself, “You are a 40 year old woman, so you cannot...” or because of the nature of the particular experiences I have had and how I coped with them, limit the ways my moving intelligence operated. I come up with new movements, moving at different speeds, holding my arms in ways that they are not normally held before. When one thinks about the range of possible movements the human body can make and the kinds of movements that are made by even the most active and creative person, one can understand that we have barely touched the range of movement possibility, in everyday life or in dance.

I do my dance meditation and it is movement like this that emerges. Sometimes, I am simply walking across the floor...in touch with what it means to walk and other times I feel and move as if my legs and arms bend like a grasshoppers, or that my hands are like the webbed feet of a lizard. Sometimes the movement resembles nothing I have seen before in living organic movement. In this way, I open up the discursive field of possibilities of my language of entering space. There are more options and possibilities to draw from in my lexicon of being. Sometimes I eventually recall oppressive situations, and as one would being in the situation of practicing

somatic psychology, the energy they hold is resolved into something else, and the way I know the world changes and the way I habitually hold my body, my character armour changes as well. This work is at the basis of the qualitative improvisational research methodology I am working with to start to understand how music, cultural hybridity and translation, and improvisation happen on the level of the language of entering space. Because the act of listening to music is one of the most remarkable meaningful whole body interactions we have. It communicates emotion, states of being, ideas and movement at the same time and it seems strongly connected to the language of entering space. Because cultural hybridity and translation are activities which happen in practice, and because improvisation is an activity which seems to work with habitual ways of knowing, the three of these activities seem to lend themselves to explorations by a movement methodology quite well.

I am in the process of adding activities from other practices to this basic methodology. I have for example, added the practice of ‘seeing through soft eyes’ and ‘listening fully to all sounds’ to this basic methodology, both of these practices are basic to Ann Bogart’s “Viewpoints” acting technique with some interesting results. Both of these practices when added to the movement meditation, shifted my state of consciousness to one where I felt more connected to my world. Perhaps, an accurate description would be that they helped to institute a state of ecstasy. It seems that ‘looking with soft eyes’ and ‘listening fully to all sounds’ stops some of the splitting which a culture by which all things are meant to be acted upon creates. I have added toning of different vowel sound to the practice with varying results. This practice is also influenced by a combination of flowing movement, Breema principles (see appendix) and understandings in Dreambody work (where dream interpretation is done on a bodily level), which I have put together. Of course, this developing methodology is profoundly influenced by the experiments

and practices which I do as workouts on the floor at home and the bodyworks and dance practices I work on with others. I am currently planning to add some additional acting exercises to my meditation as inquiry into presence, perception and character.

Working at Home

I work at home in a small space on a yoga mat. I imagine this might be training for my meditation, but also it is experiments. I have worked with so many things to understand that way that my body is me and how I can understand this for its good. Most recently, I have worked with a breath pattern, I adapted from a practice similar to Chi Gung, called Chi Yi. While I was studying Emilie Conrad's text (date unknown), I understood that she believes that the nervous system is controlled through breath. In her work with people who have lost mobility because of spinal chord injury, she found that different kinds of breath encourage mobility in all different and seemingly miraculous ways. Because I am so busy in preparation for these exams, don't have time for my regular workout, so I tried the breathing pattern recommended in the Chi Yi book with various adjustments of my own. I found that after breathing a particular way, I had a surprising vitality and flexibility, something which I am missing very much because I have cut my yoga/stretch routine out of my schedule for the time being. At home, I have done experiments releasing the psoas muscle which I learned from reading Liz Koch's books. I can't say that her claims about the effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder being located in the psoas muscle are necessarily true, but certainly when my psoas has been released I have felt a great deal of freedom. I do breathing patterns from the Breathwalk practice while standing on the wobble board to improve my concentration. I have held my hand together in the position for unconditional love, while laying in the fetal position, and felt incredible amounts of love coursing through my body.

I have tried so many combinations of things at home and it is for certain that there are ways of approaching the body which shift the way that we know ourselves and others in the world, through state. When there is a profound change in the way that we feel as we move through the world, our knowledge of the world changes. We are our bodies and understanding the ways that we know the world more clearly as bodies will help us to know the world better and to live in it in a more peaceful way, as well. There is so much about the ways that we act, treat ourselves and one another, that we don't actually realize, and some of the ways we can know these things is through the language that we enter space. We are bound together in cultural meaning and communication through the language of the way we enter space. Knowing how this is practiced, whether it be through daily meaning making in cultural hybridity, musical expression or the discourse expanding process of improvisation, might move us in directions that we haven't been able to go in before. At least, I think it makes for good art, and interesting research.

Alexander Technique, Bartenieff, and Contact Improvisation

Much of the rest of this paper will be dedicated to an explanation of the things I have learned from the practices of Alexander Technique, Bartenieff and Contact Improvisation.

While much I of the work I have done to start to understand the implications of the somatic body for use in performance, performance studies, philosophy, cultural studies, for my own well being, and just because I love it, have been solo, either in the studio or at home, a great deal of it has been through the guidance of some very wonderful teachers. As I move into the section where I describe this, I first want to express my gratitude for the gifts that my teachers have shared with me and for the pure pleasure of knowing such interesting, brilliant and caring people.

For all the wisdom and joy that working with them has brought me, the gift of having gotten to know them and the communities they draw around them have been the finest gift of all.

One cannot talk about learning somatics practices without thinking about the people they have learned them from. Somatics is so intensely personal. It is a way of knowing one another. Human being to human being. Each practioner has a different way of practicing very much based on the person that they are, based on the ways that they apprehend who others are. Somatics practices involve getting to know one another in a very special and unusual way. As a student, you get to know your teacher through the way that they see you and others. Sometimes the shared knowledge is through feel, touch. The way that my Alexander Teacher, Philip's hand knows the tone of my body. How he understands how I am holding my deep abdominal muscles, and the way my impulse to stand up out of a chair is directed by touch on my lower back. Sometimes the knowledge is through vision, the way master Alexander teacher Joan Murray, understands someone's overall pattern of movement, by watching the curves in their back interact with head and neck alignment. Most of the times the somatics practioners know a person through a use of all of their senses, but they know you and you know them. They perceive your body through theirs, and you perceive their body through yours. I perceive the subtle directions my Alexander teacher gives me through my body through their body. I remember clearly the session where Sara Hook, the person who taught me Bartenieff figured out how to teach me movement sequences. I have always had trouble with sequences. I get completely confused trying to copy them. During the session Sara looked at me, and after a few seconds said, "I know". She then proceeded to teach me the sequences by having me put my hands on her as she moved them and then quiding my body as it moved in the sequences. She understood that I needed to learn sequences kinesthetically. A whole new world opened up to me as I learned to do developmental movement

sequences which enable me to expand my repertory of movement in ways that encouraged further integration of my body. Sara, in that moment, understood me in a way that perhaps no one ever had and opened up a whole new world to me through it. Somatic's practices are high relational communication. If anything somatics practices show how based in relationship human beings are.

Alexander Technique

Of all somatics practices that I have learned, Alexander Technique has had the greatest influence on me. The Alexander Technique is a hands on practice whereby a teacher helps the student to understand the way she can regain a kind of poise that the human body is meant to move with. At the turn of the 19th century FM Alexander, the founder of the Alexander Technique began to understand that a human body moves in the most efficient manner when a particular balanced relationship between the head and the neck is maintained. This poised movement occurred when the head was 'forward and up and the back was long and wide'. Alexander taught this movement by taking students in and out of a chair. Since Alexander's experiments the technique has been further developed by practitioners around the world, as they learned to hear the another's body through their hands, and observe their own and another's body in the mirror. Alexander's work is based in principles, many which have been useful to my studies.

Alexander's idea about how the psychophysical works was a marriage of the way the psychophysical works and a philosophy of human life and the human body. As Alexander understood and worked with poise through maintaining a balance between the head and neck through movement, with the back long and wide, he also developed a philosophy which outlined the possibility of human nature through the explorations he made with the body. A key concept

in this work is that of conscious control. Alexander believed that the human body could move in the most efficient way according to our physiology, using the poise of a child first walking, as an example of poise. His thinking was that psychophysical habit, habitual vocabularies of the ways we enter the world, or repetitive subject/object relationships that person has (very much like character armouring, but still not the same), influence the way that we carry ourselves in the world (our stance) and the influence of these habits will shift someone out of a poised way of moving.

Alexander was very proactive about the way that people carried themselves, or their stances. He coined the term ‘use’ to explain the ways that we carry ourselves. One’s ‘use of oneself’ is the way that Alexander described the way one carried oneself, but also because his notion of the body was a psychophysical one, the ‘use of oneself’ refers to the way one knows and operates in the world. A psychophysical habit which effects ones natural poise, is also one which limits the way one relates or interacts in space. Moving in a habitual way is somewhat akin to relating to the world through a language of entering space that has a negative disciplining action, whereas using good poise is living, relating to the world through a language that has a positive generative aspect. One can employ ‘conscious control’, another of Alexander’s psychophysical concepts, to move from a habitual way of moving to one of poise. Alexander believed that one could learn to change the way that they moved, to restore themselves to a state of poise, which was the bodies most efficient way of moving according to our physiology.

What is special about this is, besides for the tremendous amount of grace and lightness one feels when they are poised, is that there is a kind of choice that comes along with using conscious control to move out of our habitual ways of being, that allows for agency in the way of being. It is my experience, that when I am moving in a way that is poised way, the ways that I understand

my choices as I move through space are much greater. The way I relate to others and the world is changing, not habitual. I am allowed an improvisation.

That this happens with the ways that bodies relate in space is important to understand how we create culture in relationality. The possibility of a body consciously choosing a language of entering space that is generative, over one that is disciplinary reflects that we have great capabilities for an agency (choice, freedom) in being. Cultural studies understandings of the ways that the disciplining actions of culture occur in the ways the we enter space is underdeveloped compared to the disciplining activity of language in text, either written or verbal. We stand to gain a lot by understanding the possibilities that the Alexander Technique and other somatics and dance modalities have to offer in terms of the ways that human beings develop a language of entering space. The language of entering space is in one sense a way of being, and models that investigate this are useful for general understandings of the way culture works as communication in relationality, and more significantly it is useful to understand the ways that the negative disciplining actions of colonialism and domination work in our world because many of the way that colonization and domination work is through a negative disciplining of the body, or through operating in a language of entering space which is disciplining in a negative way.

I have so much more to say about the experiences I have had with the Alexander technique. My journey into the technique has been of constant awakening into the ways that we can know ourselves. There is a vitality particular to this line of thoughtful inquiry. Knowing us, as human beings, through understanding Dart's and the Murray's Dart Procedures, a sequence which mimics developmental movement that reawakens and reactivates reflex and movement patterns

for most effective movement, I have understood the beauty and genius of human biology and the nervous system. After finally understanding the significance of the primary and secondary curves, and the muscle and fascia spirals in the body, I have a deeper understanding of our grace and balance both physically and as a way of being. The technique is about constantly expanding ways of knowing. Each practitioner brings her own experience to this hands on way of knowing, and so the field constantly develops. The many many things I have learned in the years I have studied the technique, about direction, about breath, about reflex, about tone, about being, informs everything I do. It is inside and a part of all movement exploration I make, it is primary work for me.

I have worked with so many good Alexander teachers, master teachers and beginners, and as a beginning teacher in training as well. And I wish that I could reflect more on these experiences at this time, but now I understand that the pleasure and honor I have had to do this work warrants a whole book, perhaps in article.

For now I would like to relay one set of experiences before I leave this section on the Alexander Technique.

Over the past years I have had Alexander lessons with the reader of this exam, Philip Johnston. I'd like to spend a bit of time in reflection of this experience before I move onto different topics in this exam. Philip has been a wonderful teacher in so many ways, his interest and support sends me sky high, as does the teaching and support of my other committee members. Philip and I have been working in Alexander private sessions and in his classroom in the dance department for a while now. At the end of my always very hectic week, I wind down on Thursday evenings in Philip's studio in the Pilates Center in downtown Champaign. Our little twin cities, we talk about

its culture and beauty so fondly and Philip is at the whirlwind center of so many of the really exciting and fun and artistic things that go on here. Himself and the Murrays are some of the people that make this town and University worthy of the world class reputation that it has.

Weekly, in Philip's studio I have my dose of big psychophysical learning.

It is hard to give the experience of the Alexander technique words, but I will try. There is this combination of how I become aware of the way that I move being the same as becoming aware of who I am, that is so important to the process for me. I remember at first there was the habit of the way I hardened my feet onto the ground that our practice worked with, but after enough instruction and direction in and out of the chair, first I became aware that this was my habit, and then I understood that I didn't need to do it anymore. The effect was a softness in the way that I received the earth, as I accepted its support. A way that my life no longer was a battle march that I needed to brace myself into. There was acceptance. I think the next big thing I learned about was the way my hips opened up. Coming back from the hips is something I still have to work with. That ease of being completely with myself, my sensation, the joy of being alive, my sense of safety. Most recently, Philip and I have discovered, a full twist from the hips that's brings my back into a spiral. All of these discoveries are made within the understanding of the balance in the head and neck relationship, of course. Understanding that I could move using this twist from the hips has been remarkable. Since I was a child and was diagnosed with slight scoliosis, I have always had this problem of an immobility of my back. Its hard to explain, I always felt I couldn't move my back freely because of a kind of a tension in my mid back where I felt like the scoliosis was. Once Philip pointed out that the spiral of the back needed to be initiated from the hips. I have realized all of this mobility that was always there. I am less stiff. I feel I can be more actively engaged. My attention is more multidirectional. All of the discoveries I have had with

the technique have really helped me to feel more alive, less afraid, more worthy, more balanced, more right and happier. The discoveries come as sheets of one kind of awareness are pulled off, and layers of a different kind occur.

These are some of the larger shifts that have occurred to me in the past few years. There are so many other things I have learned, as I have the pleasure of working not only with Philip, but Joan and Alex Murray (perhaps the finest Alexander teachers in the world), Rebecca Nettel-Fiol, Luc Vanier, Ya-Ju Lin, and others, each of these teachers offering so much. I have been fortunate to be here, now, during this particular period of the growth of the Alexander Technique. I have had some teacher training, and while the deep knowledge of understanding someone else's body (and one's own, because this happens through a process of feedback) through this knowing touch is still somewhat illusive to me, I have a commitment to becoming an Alexander teacher as well.

While I have above listed the various ways that a changed awareness of physical habit means also a changed position from which I interact with the world, I want to stress here that this ability to shift my ways of being doesn't only effect me but is an integral part of the way that I relate with others. It is a shift of discourse in relationality. The way that I relate to others and the objects around me is shifted by the psychophysical awareness that I gain by practicing the technique. My character changes, as does my language of entering space. I am not as influenced by cultural limitations in my kinesthetic knowledge when interacting with people. It is a qualitative shift in my language of entering space that the practice of the Alexander Technique facilitates for me, and this effects the possibilities that my interactions with others could have. The paradigm for the discourse of entering space changes, as old ways of being are replaced with ones full of more potential. These understandings carry on into my everyday life. The premise of

my movement methodology, as well as much of its practice, is based in my knowledge and experience of the Alexander technique. I think it is an excellent model to both start to understand how the material of the body makes meaning through states of being, and relationality and subsequently in everyday practice; or through arts which connote a spatial language such as music, and the subsequent resistances which might be understood in a discourse of the language in the way that one enters space. How is the material of the body involved in making meaning? Experiments in the Alexander technique gives us ground for exploration.

Contact Improvisation-Kirstie Simpson

This section of this exam is dedicated to explaining the ways that the work I have had the pleasure of doing in Kirstie Simpson's contact improvisation class has resonated with the ideas that I am working with in this exam and in my dissertation project as a whole.

Kirstie's classes (though I did not have the pleasure of attending as many as I would have liked) have generated an abundance of situations, environments, and moments which have relevance to my project. Kirstie, a dedicated and brilliant dancer, teacher and researcher into the human condition, facilitates movement experiments with the dancers that she works with that are inquiries into the nature of the way bodies relate to one another in meaningful communication. Her work is simply magical.

Contact improvisation is a movement/dance form which enables dancers to work together in contact and through spontaneous movement. Kirstie's instructions are composed of suggestions for modes of exploration and observations which lend to deeper understandings of the process.

This work truly is an inquiry into the ways that we communicate and make space together.

Touch, energy, balance, weight, perception, timing, presence, MOVEMENT working together in a dance to explore, to heal, to touch, to feel, to know, to MOVE

Instructions to explore one another with our feet, to fight, to wrestle break the code of meanings these things normally bring....feet touch bodies to explore to know, the dirtyness of the foot is forgotten, my friend and I struggle in a wrestling grip that moves us across the studio floor, we both are tenacious, I feel the strength of her sinewy body, she feels the way I can throw my weight around, she is relentless, and I push my energy into fighting back, the way I always do with an intense emotional concentration, that says give me what I deserve, to want and to fight, I was always taught it wasn't ok to want, I was always taught that to fight was to hurt, I always fight to the very end for what I want. We push against each other women in our forties, our desire and our power is felt, and we keep fighting, I loosen up and she keeps going, she keeps going I try again. I realize I have never fought in a physical fight before, it feels good, we touch each other with this intention to fight and to play, the emotion the intention

Shifting touching

Knowing it is ok to be the way that we are fighters

The body on top of, next to tugging against mine

Is weighed pulls me drags me I pull I drag we move together and apart. I forget I am there, I move fighting blindly but there in another way I am a body that fights/is fighting

Weight power balance movement emotion

We move away from each other, the next time I see her our hug is different.

In Kirstie's Contact you can't do things right but there is a way of doing things so that other things happen. 'You don't move, you are moved,' Kirstie tells me at coffee, 'You don't do'. This is something I don't get. She says, 'on the floor, there was this moment when you were so present', as an example. Another improviser says, "Yes, I was on the other side of the dance floor and I could feel something going on over there. I looked over and it was you."

‘I could feel something going on over there.’ The other movers energy is felt as you are back to back, side to side. We sense each others possibility on first contact on the studio floor and in everyday practical living. Our energies mingle and we become more than what we were alone. We know each other like this all of the time.’

Kirstie says, “ Don’t try, just stay present, you’ll get it”. When I look discouragingly on at the handstands and cartwheels she is teaching us to do. I just don’t go upside down. And as the time has gone on, I still don’t know how. But I have seen the others take it on, and not by trying just be being there. All lithe and light, tumbling and cartwheeling over each other, this fear of airborne disappearing as they take flight. They learned from being present. Kirstie says something like, ‘Its not like you learn the movement, it just comes from you, manifests in you” I become bolder. More willing to live inside the viscera, from being present. We catch the movement from each other. I then notice in the world, how this happens, how one lit person lights up a room of people. And it is not feeling, it is state, it is presence, it is a way of being. It is how one person’s way of being uplifts you when you are around them and another’s does not. Our ways of being communicate with each other.

Kirstie asks us to move together in certain ways, prompts for exploration. And then she shares some of her understandings, her experiences. She says something like, ‘You move and bodies touch each other in all of these different ways, and the ways that we are about being near each other, all of those rules and such, we don’t live by these anymore.’ Truly movement on the contact improvisation floor teaches you which of the ways of being that you practice is your own and which ones belong to the social rules we have been taught. That impulse to touch or hold, to push or pull, to run from or towards, these impulses are ways that we know who we are and let

each other know who we are. The rules that say touch on the Torso is only ok in the case of your child, a sickbed or in an act of sexuality, leaves out all the times you may just want to touch your friends belly or their low back. Our ways of touching each other and moving closer and further from each other are heavily coded, and moving in contact lets us move beyond this. And here, in the beyond, I have found tremendous joy. Once these codes of movement on the body are changed or shifted, we find that there is so much less fear and so much more love. It is as simple as that.

Contact Improvisation enables a place to experiment with movement, bodies, and each other. The different ways that we move together constantly appear and shift into others. For me the process is about awareness. What does this movement mean between the two of us? How does it change as we change? What aspect of it is important? What I loved most about being on the contact floor was the way that the sense of myself as a body changed through interaction, and the sense of safety I walked away with after moving. We became to each other so much more than what regular interaction allows for. Presences shifting, presences in relationship, bodies making worlds with each other.

Pure weight, gentle connection

Gingerly I approach,
electrified I surrender,
forcefully I receive
silently I hollar
loudly I whisper
sounds ringing from the souls of my feet

passionately I rest
a kalidescope of presence
always changing

Energetic collisions of bodies enraptured aloof each moment we become more more more

together we hear
subtle nerve knowledge
together

the amount of combinations of sensation, interaction, feeling, balance, quality of presence, shifting perception, togetherness and apartness, comfort discomfort..life is large...we are large, ways of being, human beings, human bodies, as we are over and over again.

In Contact Improvisation movement the options for becoming are endless. In practice, it is the one of the most generative languages of entering space. Personally, the work had a very powerful impact on me. Unfortunately because of time restraints I was unable to attend as much class as I would have liked to. While I was working there were a few things I noticed, here are two of them: 1) Was that after class I was very very happy 2) That I had an accelerated and very interesting way of lifting the habitual patterning from me psychophysical self as a result.

I attribute number one to the fact that I really enjoyed the work, and that it is joy based, but it is also because for the one and a half hours that we work together many of the deadening barriers we have between each other are lifted. The social ways of being that occur through everyday practice, those that are disciplining, split us to such an extent in our personal lives and hold us apart from each other, divide us in our relationships, and contact work with Kirstie, opens us up together to each other and our own self, it is a work of possibility.

As for number two, because of the work I do, often my psychophysical self is in the process of either uncovering the layers of disciplined languages of entering space that shapes my presence/perception or learning through the languages of entering space. One of the many tools in my bag is the practice of Dreambody work, by Arnie Mindell (2002)(2004). This work is like regular dreamwork but with the premise that the body, bodily sensations, body symptoms play is a part of the dream. Also, this work is premised on a notion that the one part of the everyday way we look at the world is part of the dreaming, and that we live in these dreams together. It is an idea similar to a shared worldview, but dreamwork also takes into account and somewhat explains how worldview effects perception and bodily state in a dream's effort to give us a message. It is an expanded way of thinking about the language of entering space, that includes images and the ways that we ensconce ourselves in constructed reality in everyday practice. It is quite interesting. This way of thinking is included in my qualitative improvisational practice and I use it in the way I look at my everyday life. When attending Kirstie's Improv classes my receptivity to the "Dreaming" became very high. I believe it is because of my project, in how I locate the social in the everyday language of movement and entering space; and that the interactions with people on the floor were of such varying ways of being as bodies and communicating, that my understanding through the dreaming body with very fast. Weekly, I was have very large epiphanic realizations. A lot was moving through me. This is very powerful work.

I would like to close this section on Contact Improvisation with Kirstie Simpson with a final example of the power of this work.

This spring I attended a contact improvisation performance at the Krannert Art Museum. The improvisers worked on the gallery floor, which normally hold the normal quiet vault like

behaviors of people in an art museum. Today, the spectators moved around in clusters following a group of moving dancers. The dancers improvised their way through the galleries. In every possible configuration they moved together and sounded. They shouted together and ran to slide in the gallery hallway. They climbed up and rolled off of the sitting benches. They crept and rolled along the floor. All the while in communication with each other. I turned to a friend and said, “ This is how people should always act in an art museum.” The code of movement practices was broken.

Later, I had two interesting experiences which were connected to my viewing the performance. I was curious about how watching one of these performances would impact me. Later in the week, I was sitting with a group of friends, a new group of friends from my department at school. We were talking and joking and supporting each other through the confusing situation we are dealing with in our department. It was an island of safety and fun. It was a situation that was easy to read in terms of social interaction. We had found each other in casual support full of good will. We were taking a break in our busy overworked days. In a momentary sideways glance I had a thought, “Perhaps, we are not doing what it seems we are doing together here.” For a moment it seemed that we human bodies were doing more together than the ideas of social interaction might indicate, or that our own personal motivations or relational understandings might hold, this came to me, and somehow it rings true. Since we read each other through the languages we have been taught and these languages don’t encompass everything that might be going on, our interactions might very well mean more than we know. The eyes that knew these had come from viewing the performance at the museum.

The second experience happened one morning when I was on my way to school, to teach. I was rushing along to catch the bus, thinking about all I had to do and a thought occurred to me,

“don’t control”. I thought about this. And this idea meant to not control in terms of the way I think about things but also in the way that I act. But this way of acting was not conceptual. My thought was asking me not to control in way meant impulse, sensation, direction and stance, the quality of where I was coming from into my relationality. I was asking myself not to control in a psychophysical sense. Not only this thought but the schema in which I thought it was new, this also came from my afternoon of viewing in the museum.

Who knows what the power of living in this capitalist industrial complex is on the ways that we understand ourselves embodied. Perhaps, this way that we understand ourselves as individuals with desires, is simply one possibility of the many. Certainly there are bodywork theorists that believe this (Conrad).

For my larger project the working with Kirstie Simpson holds so many possibilities. As her project includes research into deep knowledge of the human embodied.

Bartenieff/Laban

Because of the already long length of this exam I will only dedicate a short amount of space to the experience with the Bartenieff/Laban technique (Bartenieff, 2002). This in no way reflects its importance or value in my estimation. While I have been working on my PHD, I had the honor and pleasure of taking private lessons with Sara Hook from the U of I dance department. Sara knows a lot about bodies and could read my overall psychophysical patterning quite well. As I understand it one of the ways the Bartenieff/Laban methods work is to expand ones psychophysical sense of being through expanding a person’s way of being or presencing themselves in space, through suggestions of qualities and directions of movement. Certainly, this is what happened with me in my work with Sara. Through strengthening the connection between

my impulse and my connection to the world around me, through the development of whole body movement, my impulse became more vibrantly connected to my environment. My reactions became stronger, more vibrant, more connected to the sensation of the environment and responses to it. Through work in my hips, I developed a swagger that carried me defiantly and sensuously through the day. Through practicing the carriage of a queen, something my humble self had a great deal of resistance to, I became more commanding. Through working with intentions and directions in space, my repertoire of movement, gesture and posture expanded. As character stance on the fluid human level expanded into more ways of knowing, myself and my ways of being expanded. Choices for actions and reactions multiplied, three dimensionally. As developmental sequence exercises and the ability to move as a whole body expanded, the connection between inner and outer world, impressions, impulse and action were bonded.

As with the Alexander Technique and Contact Improvisation, this work has much to offer in terms of an understanding of human nature and the ways that entering space can be thought of in a cultural and philosophical perspective. My teacher, Sara Hook, has incredible insight into the way we work as human beings/bodies. I thank her for the time she spent with me and the sharing of her experiential knowledge. There is so much to be said about the knowledge of these movement artists that has yet to be said. We live in the world embodied and to know this world understanding it through the embodied perspective makes simple and powerful sense. Dancers and Somatics practitioners know this and are living vital investigations and explorations in this world daily. I am so please to be one of the people who has had the chance to deepen my own knowledge through this work. These dancers and movers are an extraordinary group of people,

with an unflinching dedication to their research and creations. I call myself lucky to find myself among them.

They have the potential to change our world immeasurably with the work and understanding they have. I only hope that the knowledge these kinds of work conduct will gain more attention. In the fields of psychological and physical health, as well as philosophies and theories of culture, they have so much to offer.

Concluding Remarks

As I bring this meditation to the role somatics work has in my understanding of culture and life, and the human body. There are many loose ends which have not even had the chance to be talked about. Very important to this discussion is the role of the Universal? Are the principles about the material to be considered universals about the material of the human body. I would say that it is important to understand how the meaning making capabilities of the human body are active in the making of relational culture and that somatics practices are one way of looking at this. But as for it being a Universal. I'd say that the definition of the Universal needs to be more clearly worked out for me before any kind of a claim like this can be made. It is true that people have done experiential work with their bodies and have found some similar results, that doesn't mean that these results wouldn't be different if the understandings and the cultures within which these experiments have been carried out were different. But these kinds of experiments have been conducted cross culturally and people have found similarities in results. Still, I'd say there is a cultural lens on what we understand in any case.

Another thing is the very important question about how this applies to people who don't have use of a large movement range in their bodies. My feeling is that this process isn't so much about the

range of movement, but of the expressivity of the movement, the way the body perceives and presences itself. Of course, practices like the Alexander Technique would have to be modified to be of any use in a situation where someone did not have what is considered mobility in the legs but it could be. Emilie Conrad's "Continuum" movement practice, was greatly expanded with her work with people who had spinal chord injury. Her feeling is that if there is life there is movement. I can't say that these practices work for all people. But I would say that if parts of the body aren't moving in a way that we are socially taught to think of as normal, that wouldn't mean that the somatic process is occurring on less of a level. It just happen on a different level. This moving is more of a questions of sensation and understanding. It is about the gentle movement of the breath. Conrad believes that the whole of the movement system's reaction is based in patterns and quality of the breath. I can understand why this is true. As a matter of fact breath might be the key to understanding character in people. The head neck relationship might be also. But we do come in wholes, and the whole of the body of a person who doesn't use his legs to walk is one that could be understood through somatics principles, if the person wanted to understand herself in this way.

There is one more experience I would like to relate. Alex Murray has taught me about the ways of looking through the eyes. He taught me that if I let me/eyes look at something in a way where movement is lead by the looking, I leave the habitual way of moving. I have learned that if I move to look at something without my eyes leading, my movement is more habitual. If I am seeking, in the mode of being with my environment, I have one kind of response, one that is without habit. If I am seeking to move according to the pattern of me 'moving to see' that is another, that is more habitual. The way that I move to see, is my character, there is a habitual

subject/object relationship involved. The way that I move when I follow my seeing eyes is another, this is a non-habitual way of moving. Character, subject object relationship.

Finally there is one more thing I'd like to share. The idea is just so beautiful that I couldn't let the moment go without expressing it. In Deborah Hay's book, "My Body, the Buddhist," a collection of meditations on her dance practice, she often uses the phrase, "Alignment is everywhere". In the busy ness of this exam process, I have thought of this phrase often.

"Alignment is everywhere"(Hay, 2000).

We can just be.

"The stars blinked! All life said yes!" (Conrad, date unknown, pg 18)



Endnotes

ⁱ Movement Research is a New York City based dance institution, for more information please see <http://movementresearch.org/>

ⁱⁱ Currently, the University of Illinois Dance Department at Urbana has many dancers/choreographers which employ some form of Somatics in their department. I have had the pleasure of their good company. Choreographer/Dancers who use somatics as research in their work include faculty, Jan Erkert, Rebecca Nettel-Fiol, Kirstie Simsom, Jennifer Monson, Sara Hook, and Philip Johnston. MFA's in dance who employing somatics as research, include Kate Insolia, Hallie Aldrich and Christine Betsill.

ⁱⁱⁱ For a full discussion of US orientalism of India, see VJ Prashad's book, "The Karma of Brown Folks".

^{iv} Often when watching or listening to the news, I hear the Pashtun language and can understand some of it. This is indicative of the situation I am in, never fully understanding the language I grew up with but able to understand parts of related languages.

^v The examples in this paragraph refer to qualities of practice, or the qualities of the presence of practice. It is part of a kinesthetic language, and it has something to do with the way that we are.

^{vi} Both Eugene Gendlin and Sondra Perl encourage the use of the felt sense for thinking and writing. Eugene Gendlin teaches a technique for out of paradigm thinking called Thinking at the Edge and Sondra Perl has developed a technique for wrting. Both of these processes use Eugene Gendlin's technique called focusing, which involves working with a full body sensation.

^{vii} During President Barak Obama's candidacy his message of hope reverberated around the world. In one of his campaign speeches he made the statement, "there is nothing false about hope". His election eve was one that brought some light to a dark period for many people in the United States and elsewhere.

^{viii} For details on my sister Lila Yomtoob's newest film project, America 1979, about Iranian's in America during the hostage crisis, see <http://america1979.com/>

^{ix} This piece was created for and presented as part of an extended piece, presented at QI 2010, by Kate Insolia, Jacob Crawford, Desiree Yomtoob. Jake is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. He was a Farsi specialist during his time in the armed forces. We met 'practicing' some funky sounding Pharsi speaking. Kate Insolia is an extremely gifted choreographer dedicated to the eradication of racism.

^x When I told my sister I was naming a section of my dissertation in this way, she belly laughed. This phrase spoken in Pharsi, means I don't speak Pharsi. It is a catch phrase that I have used in conversations when Pharsi is being spoken, since I was a little girl. The phrase, Man Pharsi Mefmam, (I understand Pharsi) uaually goes in front of this phrase, explaining why I can enter into the conversation in the first place.

^{xi} Years ago I read a small book by Salman Rushdie on the Wizard of Oz. This small piece was prompted by that book.

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